

**Minutes of a Meeting of the
Joint Overview & Scrutiny Committee of
Adur District and Worthing Borough Councils**

Queen Elizabeth II Room, Shoreham-by-Sea

22 September 2016

Stephen Chipp (Chairman)
Joss Loader (Vice Chairman)

Adur District Council:

*Carol Albury
George Barton
Kevin Boram
Clive Burghard
James Butcher
Robin Monk

Worthing Borough Council:

Roy Barraclough
*Keith Bickers
Nigel Morgan
*Louise Murphy
Luke Proudfoot
Bob Smytherman
Jane Sim
Steve Waight

*Absent

JOSC/16-17/10	Declarations of Interest/Substitutions
	<p>Councillor Callum Buxton declared his substitution for Councillor Keith Bickers.</p> <p>Councillor Paul Baker declared his substitution for Councillor Louise Murphy</p> <p>Councillors Bob Smytherman declared an interest in agenda item 8 as the West Sussex County Council representative on the task and finish group.</p>
JOSC/16-17/11	Minutes
	<p>Councillor Waight informed the Committee that he had attended the Joint Strategic Committee to present the comments of the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee regarding the Joint Revenue Outturn Report 2015-16 but had not been afforded the opportunity to do so. The Joint Chairs agreed to write to the Chairmen of the Joint Strategic Committee.</p> <p>Resolved that the Minutes of the Committee held on 14 July 2016 be approved as the correct record and signed</p>

JOSC/16-17/10	Public Question Time
<p>The Chairman read out three questions on behalf of residents concerning the Review of Southern rail ticket office closures and general levels of service:</p> <p>Robert Bromley: Question for GTR/Southern Rail - I would like to know whether the advertised reason for all the cancellations on Southern – high levels of staff unavailability – was true or not. I don't believe that there were exceptionally high levels of sickness for such an extended period and I have heard rumours that GTR were not allowing staff to work overtime when the service depends on staff working overtime. So if a train company does rely on overtime to run a service; why? And if the service was so appalling due to a lack of overtime being worked was it a company decision or were the workers just exercising a right to not work overtime?</p> <p>Sally Roberts: Question for Southern Rail - What exactly are their plans for the future to ensure they provide their customers with the level of service they pay a higher than average price for?</p> <p>Steve Collins On the news I see MPs are pushing for increased compensation for season ticket holders.</p> <p>They are suggesting a 20% rebate for season tickets.</p> <p>Question: Will that 20% rebate be only for renewals of new season tickets, or also (equally important) retrospectively so that those that held a season ticket that has now expired (but was heavily affected by the strikes and rubbish service over the last year) also get compensation for that?</p> <p>I know they keep saying that the London Bridge station improvements will deliver huge benefits and are the cause of many travel problems - but for me and many others in this area this has had no impact as I only travel from Southwick to Worthing on the South Coast Line (which goes nowhere near London Bridge) and my daughter only travels from Portslade to Bognor (and Chichester) on the trains.</p> <p>It would be good to raise the retrospective 20% rebate for the last year (not just for new ticket purchases).</p> <p>The Chairman stated that he would put the questions to GTR Southern later in the meeting.</p>	
JOSC/16-17/11	Items Raised Under Urgency Provisions
<p>There were no urgent items.</p>	
JOSC/16-17/12	Consideration of any matter referred to the Committee in relation to a call-in of a decision

There were no items.

JOSC/16-17/13 Scrutiny Review - Southern Rail Ticket Office Closures and General Levels of Service

Before the Committee was a report by the Director for Digital and Resources, a copy of which was sent to all members, a copy of which was attached to the signed copy of these minutes. The report before members provided a briefing to assist the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee in undertaking its review looking at proposed changes to Southern Rail Ticket Offices and other operating procedures.

Brighton Line Commuters Group

A representative of the Brighton Line Commuters' group, Mr David Start, gave evidence to the Committee. His representation is summarised as follows:

- The service level problems with Southern had impacted people's business activities and personal family lives;
- Rail users were having to adjust the way they lived their lives to cope with unreliability of the service;
- Users had changed and were considering changing their business patterns to cope with the disruption;
- A Speedy resolution to the dispute was needed so that the service could get back to normal
- The representative told members of inaudible train announcements, the frustration of short formations and trains skipping stops to make up time;
- With regards to ticket office closures the representative explained that as they were the ticket offices were not always open as they had been advertised. When seeking an explanation from Southern / GTR he had been told that it was acceptable if they remained opened for between 90 and 95% of their opening times.

A Member questioned Mr Start about the effect that the ticket office closures may have on commuters. Mr Start gave the example of a blind rail user who would have trouble buying tickets from the ticket machines because they had poor accessibility options.

A Member asked if the Brighton Line Commuters Group supported the requirement to have conductors on trains at all times. Mr Start stated that he was in favour of retaining conductors on the services that required conductors.

National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers (RMT)

Jeff Slee from the RMT national executive gave evidence to the committee. His representation is summarised as follows:

- It was the union's hope that all parts of the industry work together to deliver an effective rail service;

- Changes that were being proposed would hinder a reliable and efficient rail service;
- GTR/Southern had reduced the morale and demotivated staff with a range of measure including the removal passes and car parking permits for which had led to a reluctance of staff to 'go the extra mile';
- The union had resorted to taking action because Southern/GTR wouldn't listen;
- There had been no orchestrated disruption as had been claimed;
- Conductors were railway safety qualified;
- The proposed changes would remove the guaranteed assistance for disabled passengers;
- The proposed onboard supervisors would not be trained to the same level of safety as the conductors;
- The actions of conductors on trains involved in an accident near watford were extolled and used as an example of the king of work undertaken by conductors;
- Initial proposed changes to ticket office opening hours would see ticket offices only open during peak hours with a station attendant selling tickets on the platform at other times. Those proposals would have been too much for the attendant to manage as they would also be responsible for manning barriers and other tasks and in reality they might not be able to sell tickets;
- It was related that claims under the delay and repay scheme would not be able to be made at ticket offices
- Members were told that there had been productive talks between the union and the rail operator resulting in a compromise agreement where the proposals for the changes to ticket office opening times would be trialled at a select number of stations before being assessed for wider implementation. The Union was confident that the trials would demonstrate the need for ticket offices to remain open at their usual operating hours;

A Member asked the representative if the unions felt that they had the support of passengers. The representative detailed results of an opinion poll and anecdotal evidence from conductors that the response from the public had been positive.

A Member asked why is it that driver only operation is used by other train companies perfectly safely but is deemed by the RMT to be so unsafe for Southern Rail? Members were told that the DOO services were not unsafe, they were 'less safe'. The representative told members that of the 11 accidents relating to passengers alighting from platforms 8 had occurred on DOO rains.

A Member asked the following question: 'Everyone has a basic right and a duty to be able to carry out work that does not cause danger to themselves and to others. Many, if not all companies require work to stop if that situation occurs. Given that duty, how can RMT and ASLEF drivers deliver and be responsible for significantly all of the 30% of all train journeys in the UK that are provided by Driver Operated Only trains, which includes Thameslink, Gatwick and Brighton Expresses using the same stations as Southern?' In response the representative reiterated that DOO trains were less safe. The train drivers union ASLEF agreed that the DOO trains

presented an increased risk. The Committee was told that It was Central Government Policy to push DOO trains.

A Member drew a comparison between claims that there had been no unofficial action and the statement that staff had been unwilling to go the extra mile. The Member asked if the RMT could justify using the commuters as pawns in a game of chess to achieve its goals. The representative from the RMT stated that where somebody was sick they needed to provide a doctor's note. Unions had not encouraged or in any way orchestrated any 'unofficial action'. Levels of sickness were at a normal level. There was a shortage of staff and drivers in particular, 300 cancelations in the London suburban areas were of DOO trains.

A Member asked how many staff would lose their positions. The RMT representative stated that with regards to Ticket office staff under original proposals 77.5 staff were affected. With regards to conductor staff it was claimed that there would be a net loss of 100 posts.

A Member asked if the RMT accepted that when it went on strike it made it unpopular. The representative told members that when a strike happened he realised that it would be unpopular but union members felt that it was an action they had to resort to.

Govia Thames Railink / Southern

GTR / Southern was represented by Angie Doll, Katherine Cox and Eddie Toase. A presentation was given based upon slides given to all members, a copy of which is attached to these minutes.

The Chairman put forward the questions raised by the public

In response to the question raised by Robert Bromley Members were told that there had been no ban on rest day working, there had been a rapid rise in sickness and a reluctance to work on rest days. The company introduced the revised timetable because it couldn't manage the amount of ad-hoc cancellations.

In response to the question raised by sally roberts Members were told that 200 services were being brought back into operation and that levels of sickness were dropping. Members were informed further of the process of staff returning to work.

In response to the question from Steve Collins Members attention was drawn to a recent statement from Paul Maynard MP, Rail Minister which stated:

'I also acknowledge that compensation is an important part of this picture, given the current cost of rail travel and the amount of disruption caused. In its current form, Delay Repay compensation continues to apply against the permanent standard timetable. It is important that all travellers are aware of that when assessing their eligibility to claim. The Secretary of State and I are continuing to consider more generous compensation for passengers on this route, and we hope

to make a timely announcement' (Rail Minister, Paul Maynard, speaking in the House of Commons, 12 September 2016).

A Member asked 'Under the plans for reclassifying Train Guards, what is the anticipated effect on disabled travellers embarking and disembarking the trains where assistance is required to do so. Currently the Guard would assist on the platform with ramps for access, will this still be the case?' The Committee was told that disabled passengers would still be able to receive assistance on and off trains. Passengers would be encouraged to book in advance but would continue to be assisted on and off trains without notice.

A Member asked 'By what date will the 222 services that remain cancelled be guaranteed to be reinstated and if the resumption of services is to be staggered how will Southern Rail communicate the information to customers'. The Committee was told that the full service should be resumed by the end of October and explained how this would be communicated to the wider public.

A Member asked why GTR / Southern was not a profitable company given the profits made by its parent company the 'go ahead group'. Members were told that the service was currently not good enough but investments in staff and the service would help the company become profitable. When questioned about the £20M invested by the Government the representative from GTR detailed for members the infrastructure projects where the money was being invested. Members were also told that there had been about £4M paid in Delay and Pay scheme.

A Member asked 'What time would staff be expected to work until on a station platform without the security of a lockable office and potentially handling cash from ticket sales?' Members were told that there would be access at all times.

A Member asked 'Given Southern's terrible performance this year, surely as way of an apology to passengers Southern won't be increasing prices? If Southern are to increase prices, what is the justification for this?' The representative made an unreserved apology for the disruption to services, members were told that fare rises were set by the Department for Transport.

A Member asked the following question 'What is plain to everyone, and admitted by Southern Rail, is that the impact of the engineering work at London Bridge is significantly greater than envisaged and is causing unacceptable performance levels. Why, when the company is not coping to rectify this situation and as a result lost credibility to deliver change successfully, did it think that it was an opportune time to make fundamental changes to staffing at its stations?' The representative told members that they felt they were making small changes for a great benefit. There would be no job losses as a result of the changes and the jobs of conductors would be more or less the same but without the responsibility for opening and closing the train doors. Upon request it was confirmed that the relevant job descriptions could be shared with the Chairman.

A Member asked how long it would be for the company to become profitable and

was told within two years.

A Member pointed out that different figures had been given by GTR and the RMT concerning the numbers of jobs that were being lost as a result of the changes and that greater clarity on the issue should be pursued.

The meeting adjourned at 8.51pm

The meeting reconvened at 9.00pm

Resolved:

- i) That the Committee thanks the representatives from Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR), RMT and the Brighton Line Commuters Group for attending the meeting to provide the informative presentations for consideration by the Committee which has enabled them to make the recommendations detailed below;
- ii) That both GTR, RMT and others be urged to resolve their differences and bring an end to the disruption to rail services as soon as possible to help improve the wellbeing of Adur and Worthing local residents, visitors and businesses;
- iii) That on behalf of the Committee, the Chairman will write to Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR) and the RMT where appropriate to express the following concerns, which the Committee recommends be addressed, for the benefit of local residents, businesses, and visitors, to improve the level of service generally:-
 - That both GTR and the RMT ensure that there is improved contact and communication on a regular basis with those residents, businesses, and visitors, in the Adur and Worthing communities, regarding the ongoing disputes and disruptions and changes to service levels. The Committee is of the view that this improved communication will help inform the communities of the ongoing issues. In particular, this communication should include updates on:-
 - What the proposed closure of the ticket offices will mean for disabled users and how the reclassifying of the train guards will impact on disabled users requiring access to trains;
 - Detailed up to date information on the current levels of service, the proposed level of service over the next week and any reinstatement of train services planned to help customers plan for travel;

iv) That GTR be urged to ensure that the right for customers to claim compensation is brought to their attention at the time the disruption occurs and shall assist in any way possible the customers who have experienced delay and inconvenience to claim appropriate recoverable compensation for the disruptions to the rail services in regard to both the Delay and Enhanced compensation scheme.

v) That GTR be requested to publish information indicating the numbers of employees employed as conductors, as drivers, and ticket office staff, prior to the start of this planned programme and what the number of employees are expected to be at the end of the planned programme and confirm whether there will be planned compulsory or voluntary redundancies arising from the programme.

vi) That GTR be asked to deliver its services for ticket offices and platform services as advertised and to ensure opening hours are adhered to.

vii) To ensure that GTR make all announcements and communications affecting Service in clear and coherent manner and to ensure that those announcements and communications are brought to the attention of its customers.

JOSC/16-17/14

Outline Forecast 2017/18 to 2021/22 and Budget Strategy

Before the Committee was a report by the Director for Digital and resources, a copy of which is attached to a signed copy of these minutes as item 7. This report before member aimed to set out how council funding was changing over the next few years, outlining the revenue forecast and setting out the Councils' strategic response, creating the conditions to be self-financing by 2020/21. With the detailed budget proposals for 2017/18 coming forward to Joint Strategic Committee in December, the reports set out the broader context for the detailed work that was underway.

The Head of Finance introduced the report to the Committee and explained the budgetary pressures facing the Councils.

A Member commented that that one would normally expect to see a corporate plan and the budget would be the method by which the corporate plan (strategy) were delivered financially. However the 'Catching the Wave' strategic document was not due to be updated until December when the current document ended. Concern was expressed that the budget would be more or less set at the same time as the updated strategy. Members were told that budget paper that had gone before the Joint Strategic Committee (JSC) had set out different options for the setting of

Council Tax but the JSC had not indicated what its intentions were in this regard which would have been helpful. In addition it was pointed out that although it appeared that there was a surplus in the budget, this had been due to exceptional additional income mainly due to minimum revenue provision. It was asserted that the JSC could have concentrated more on the type of income it could have achieved from the Councils' investments.

Members attention was drawn to some inaccuracies in the recommendations that had labelled sections in the report .

The Chief Financial Officer clarified that a further options report would be sent to the individual Cabinets in January 2017. The report before Members was the initial stage of the budget with the final budget

A Member mentioned plans to place the Theatres into a trust and purported that this would remove a financial burden from the taxpayers of worthing and that the Joint Strategic Committee should move ahead with plans using the previously devised schedule.

Resolved:

- i) that the report be noted

Recommendation:

- i) that the Joint Strategic Committee develop a Corporate Plan or 'Surf's Up' volume two to run alongside the budget;
- ii) that the Joint Strategic Committee clarify proposed Council Tax increases 17/18 to 21/22 rather than just agree Officer recommendations listed in the report;
- iii) that the Joint Strategic Committee investment strategy is based upon the SLY principles that would give an increased return on the Councils' investment;
- iv) that future reports be proof read so that further typographical error can be avoided.

JOSC/16-17/XX

Housing Provision for Care Leavers - Report from West Sussex Scrutiny Steering Group

Before the Committee was a report by the Director for Digital and Resources a copy of which was circulated to all members, a copy of which is attached to the signed copy of these minutes. The report before members set out the findings of the West Sussex Joint Scrutiny Review of Housing Provision for Care Leavers which was undertaken by a Task and Finish Group set up by the West Sussex Joint Scrutiny Steering Group.

A Member lauded the report and stressed that it was important the findings of the review be kept under review on an ongoing basis.

The Housing Solutions Manager informed members that there were monthly meetings scheduled with West Sussex County Council to look at pathway plans of care leavers.

Resolved: that the Committee notes the Working Groups' report and forwards it to the Joint strategic Committee for consideration.

JOSC/16-17/15

**Adur and Worthing Joint Overview and Scrutiny
Committee Work Programme – 2016/17**

Before the Committee was a report by the Director for Digital and Resources, a copy of which was sent to all Members and a copy of which is attached to the signed copy of these minutes as item 8. The report outlined progress on the work contained in the 2016/17 Work Programme.

Councillor Hazel Thorpe was invited to present her request for an item to be added to the Scrutiny work Programme. Members felt that the best way to proceed would be to receive a report from relevant officer and invite the Cabinet Members for Health and Wellbeing at a later meeting.

A Member noted that the Committee had confirmed at a previous meeting that Worthing's Local Plan and the outcome of the devolution bids. It was confirmed that the issues would be coming before the Committee at the appropriate time.

Resolved:

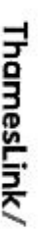
- i) That the report be noted;
- ii) that the 'review of hate crime issues following Brexit' be added to the Work Programme.

The meeting was declared closed by the Chairman at 10.10pm it having commenced at 6.30pm.

Chairman

The GTR franchise

- Comprising Thameslink, Southern, Gatwick Express and Great Northern, the GTR franchise was created to deliver the Thameslink Programme
- Designed to deliver a very ambitious improvement programme including;
 - Introducing four new fleets of trains, cascading two other fleets to other parts of the network and redelivering others to rolling stock leasing companies/other operators
 - Delivering the UK's largest driver training programme to improve resilience, provide training cover for new/cascaded rolling stock and upgraded infrastructure as well as additional services
- Joint working between Network Rail, GTR is delivering the following:
 - Rebuilding of London Bridge; track and infrastructure improvements; platform extensions; new depots; new trains



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Southern rail co-owner Go-Ahead reports £100m profits

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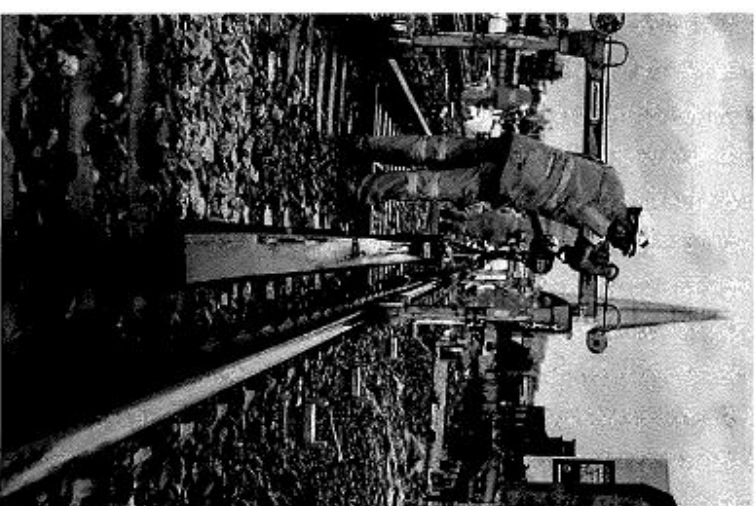
- This relates to other businesses owned by our parent company Go-Ahead, primarily the bus division
- GTR did not make any profit last year.

- Neither is it expected to make any profit in the coming year either



Context

- Phenomenal growth in past 5 years; many years of under investment
- Half way through a four year programme
- GTR franchise aims to modernise the railway
- Gradual improvements in quality and reliability of services and information over the next 2.5 years
- Full benefits will materialise in 2018



Thameslink/

Our plans for On Board Supervisors

A railway fit for the future

Greater use of technology on existing and new trains to help run a more reliable train service to meet the increasing demand on your route.

Critical to support the delivery of major infrastructure changes, including the multi-billion pound Thameslink Programme.



Fewer cancelled trains

Trains where doors are operated solely by drivers won't be cancelled if on-board supervisors are unavailable.

Drivers opening and closing doors - over 40% of our services already safely operate this way and have done for many years.



Our on board staff are here to stay

Staff are not being taken off your trains - as many staff on board to support you as there are today.

We value our team - they are here to stay with no reduction in salary or job losses.



GN
GAINING CARRIAGES



Thameslink/

Accessibility

We are working on local station teams and accessibility groups on a station by station basis to ensure that our proposals deliver the best solution for all passengers

- **Keeping staff** – we have guaranteed every train which historically operated with a conductor will continue to have either a conductor or a second member of OBS rostered
- **Training** – all OBS staff are trained in disability awareness and ramp deployment. In addition to platform staff (who will continue to deploy ramps as at present) they will also be able to provide assistance getting on and off trains for those passengers who need it
- **Boarding assistance** – On OBS services, the driver will be responsible for dispatching the train, and will communicate with the OBS to ensure that no passengers requiring boarding assistance are left on the platform. Platform staff, who are unaffected by these changes, will also be available to offer assistance at staffed stations, as at present.
- **Continued safety** – Driver Only Operation is a recognised safe way of operation in place for over 25 years. 60% of GTR services and 40% of Southern services already operate that way.



£20m performance fund

“It is important to say that this £20 million is not money that is going to Southern but money that is going to Network Rail to fund its priorities in improving the infrastructure to give Southern the best chance it has to run the very reliable and predictable service that I spoke of earlier”.

(Rail Minister Paul Maynard, speaking in House of Commons, 12 Sept)



Thameslink/

Compensation

“I also acknowledge that compensation is an important part of this picture, given the current cost of rail travel and the amount of disruption caused. In its current form, Delay Repay compensation continues to apply against the permanent standard timetable. It is important that all travellers are aware of that when assessing their eligibility to claim. The Secretary of State and I are continuing to consider more generous compensation for passengers on this route, and we hope to make a timely announcement”.

(Rail Minister, Paul Maynard, speaking in House of Commons, 12 Sept)



ThamesLink/