

Cross Border Pathing. Cambrian Main Line

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To: "George, Russell (Aelod Cynulliad I Assembly Member)" <Russell.George@assembly.wales>

Date: 19/01/2017 02:54

Russell,

Many thanks for organising the meeting about Cross Border Transport Issues last Tuesday.

As requested, some details about proposals we have seen regarding train paths between Birmingham New Street and Birmingham International.

For background; since 2008, the Cambrian service from Aberystwyth to Birmingham has been extended to Birmingham International. This was done in the main to improve timetable reliability. It also provides a vital service for the people of Mid Wales to access a major international airport.

Prior to this, late running Cambrian trains would be turned round short at Wolverhampton as there was not sufficient time spent at Birmingham New Street to "reset" the timetable and enable an on-time departure. The capacity problems of that station require an immediate turn around.

The extension of the working to Birmingham International allowed a 20 minute layover, which for the most part permitted a late running eastbound train to depart on time for its return working to Mid Wales. Timekeeping, which had been rather sporadic on occasions, became much improved and this is the situation which continues to the present.

However, recently there have been proposals from within the West Midlands franchise to curtail the train paths for Cambrian services at Birmingham New Street once again. The paths would be allocated to other providers within the West Midlands region.

We are not happy with this at all as it would curtail the strategic link with the international airport. Moreover, we are concerned that timekeeping would once again suffer and trains would be turned at Wolverhampton if running late, to the great inconvenience of the travelling public. Flights and appointments will be missed and this will not be seen as a service on which to rely.

Before the extension to International, the knock on effect of late running Cambrian trains caused widespread problems all around the West Midlands, with trains on Cross Country and the Kidderminster-Dorridge service suffering delays also.

We urge you to bring this to the attention of the Minister and civil servants when discussing cross border issues with officials in the West Midlands.

I will raise other matters under a different cover.

Thanking you for your assistance.

Kind regards,

Angus Eickhoff
SARPA Chairman

<http://sarpa.info>