

NOTE TO COUNCILLOR MARTIN MULLANEY AND
EMMA THORNES, DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

22nd November 2004

MOSELEY AND KINGS HEATH WARD COMMITTEE
CAMP HILL RAILWAY LINE

I refer to the Resolution of the Moseley and Kings Heath Ward Committee passed at the meeting on 7th October 2004 requesting details on the feasibility of reopening the above rail line to passenger services.

POLICY POSITION

The City Council's Unitary Development Plan including its proposed modification, refers to encouraging local rail service improvement including the possible reintroduction of rail services serving the Moseley and Kings Heath area, i.e. the Camp Hill Line. In the City Council's 20 Year Transport Strategy 'Visions' it states that "the City Council work with Centro, rail operators and Railtrack to support improvements to the rail network, its rolling stock and infrastructure. It will also promote rail links to new developments where they are feasible and appropriate".

FEASIBILITY WORK

The City Council's Regeneration Advisory Team on 17th April 2000 considered a report on the consultants study looking at Cross City Rail which included options for reinstatement of passenger services on the Camp Hill Line. Tests were undertaken assuming a half hour diesel operated service either on the circular route using the Lifford curve or running diesels to Frankley on the proposed Frankley branch with stations reintroduced at Stirchley, Kings Heath, Moseley and Sparkbrook. Patronage forecasts were reasonable with around 1,000 per trips per day per station. However, the report recommended proceeding with the 10 minute interval service on the Cross City Line due to the high demand particularly to University and Five Ways. Incorporating the Camp Hill Line was particularly affected by capacity limitations at Kings Norton junction, on the route to Longbridge as well as at Proof House Junction and the congested nature of the east end of New Street Station.

The 10 minute service on the Cross City Line has now been implemented and there is no early prospect of resignalling and track work on the stretch from Kings Norton to Longbridge. The option of a chord at Bordesley to link into the future reopening of the connections into Old Moor Street Station would overcome the New Street approaches problem but at a significant cost. The main difficulty to be addressed would be making an economic case where the government have tightened the rules on justification for new stations and reopening lines where the operating revenue must cover the operational costs as a minimum requirement. This is particularly difficult for a new route such as the Camp Hill line where additional or cascading of rolling stock would be needed.

The Strategic Rail Authority (due to be redundant through the forthcoming Railways Bill) have begun work on the Regional Planning Assessment looking forward 20 years and it is possible that they could be asked to review the options for reopening the Camp Hill Line as part of that study through the City Council's support. That would establish what options might be available operationally e.g. the diversion of existing or through services.

CHRIS HAYNES
POLICY MANAGER

Copies to:
Janet Hinks, Committee Section
David Bull