

## **Issues and questions raised by Stevenage Rail User Group**

We wish to raise by way of an agenda the following points on the 18th October:

1. What plans are there for Stevenage station to gain more seats during peak hours? We want to ensure and avoid at all costs any discussion whereby Govia feel this be a "wider network discussion". We are asking specifically about Stevenage station, and why 90% of those that board a train in the morning have to stand all the way to London. Wholly unacceptable.
2. Why specifically are there no starter trains for Stevenage? If there were to be, what specifically is required infrastructure wise? Fifth platform. Discuss.
3. If Stevenage cannot accommodate a starter train, why has provision not been made for trains to start further south than Cambridge or Peterborough? There needs to be evidence from Govia that they have considered what's best for Stevenage - not just treat the town as an afterthought but the town itself and the commuters using it. Please request evidence of how many SEATS EXACTLY additionally we can expect from December in the revised timetable. Nobody is convinced the service will improve, merely a few more train options but without seating. There is little point in starting a train from Peterborough for it to be jammed full by the time it arrives into Stevenage. What is the plan here? My expectation is for a granular explanation from Govia to then relay to the wider group.
4. How many additional high peak trains are expected and when? This is urgently required as there was little to no consultation when the timetable was revised back in May. Time for Govia to listen to those that pay the money and use the service.

**In addition** - ahead of the meeting on the 18th, I suggest we take a quantitative approach to matters. Please see below my requests on behalf of the group.

It is evident that out of 14,000 commuters who use the station each day, only 100 people were consulted as to the May timetable changes. I strongly suggest in order for there to be a solution, we remedy this immediately to give us facts to work from going forward.

1. My suggestion is Govia present rail user numbers on the 18th October who boarded a train between 6am - 9am on a given working week day and were unable to be seated. I think it's vital Govia are accountable to provide their feedback based on how many passengers EXACTLY cannot be seated each day during high peak hours. I would like to then compare this with the anticipated number of seats they propose to make available ONLY AT STEVENAGE STATION on the 9th December 2018. I also want to discuss how peak trains would be therefore be required to accommodate the station - there aren't nearly enough either AM or PM.

### **Total people boarding V's Seats available**

2. If GOVIA refuse to assist by accommodating the above (very reasonable) request, then I would be keen to hear why exactly this is given they have advised they are looking to assist to rectify the exceptionally poor service of late? If they have these exact numbers to provide, then I would like clarity on how these were obtained to ensure they are accurate in their assessment of the station's needs. This point is vital to discussions I feel. If I can give up countless hours to collate feedback on behalf of the Rail Group to improve things, then I would expect a large corporate like Govia to oblige without any hesitation whatsoever. Let's start with the facts, not a sample size of 100 people which started this sorry mess in the first place.

To be clear, I'm requesting this evaluation be conducted before the 18th October to ensure we have completely accurate information to work from in this meeting.

Please treat the above with the urgency it requires, we have been more than patient since May - it's time for a well overdue course correction.

Aljit Vohra for Stevenage Rail User Group