

SUMMARY OF DECISIONS

Meeting:	Environment & Economy Select Committee	
Date:	Monday, 29 July 2019	
Place:	Autun Room, Daneshill House, Danestrete	
Members Present:	Councillors:	Michael Downing (Chair), Adam Mitchell CC (Vice-Chair), Doug Bainbridge, Adrian Brown, Teresa Callaghan, Jody Hanafin and Loraine Rossati.

1	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	
	<p>Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Stephen Booth and Jim Brown.</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest.</p>	
2	MINUTES - 25 JUNE 2019	
	<p>It was RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Environment & Economy Select Committee meeting held on 25 June 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.</p> <p>The Chair drew Members' attention to the provisional date of 3 September 2019 for the Select Committee's next meeting, at which it was hoped that consideration would be given to the provision of Post Office services in the Borough. He asked Members to pencil in this date in their diaries/calendars.</p>	
3	STEVENAGE RAIL STATION UPDATE	
	<p>The Network Rail (NR) and Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR) representatives gave presentations which provided updates on the Stevenage Turnback (5th Platform) project, the Govia Thameslink Spring 2019 timetable and the wider works along the East Coast Main Line (ECML) in support of the King's Cross remodelling project.</p>	

During the course of the presentations, the following matters were raised:

- The NR representative confirmed that the Stevenage Turnback works were on schedule for completion in time for implementation within the Summer 2020 timetable;
- A Member who was a regular commuter raised the safety issue of Platform 1 at Stevenage Railway Station, which she felt was dangerous due to its narrow width in places, especially during the crowded peak periods and with the additional trains to St. Pancras. The GTR representative undertook to look into this issue;
- The same Member commented that the new carriages contained less seats which meant that passengers joining trains at Stevenage during peak hours invariably had to stand for their journey. The GTR representative explained that there were no plans for either additional trains or more trains to be of 12 carriage length, as the both the number of trains per hour and the size of the fleet were at maximum levels;
- In terms of the service on the Hertford North line once the Stevenage turnback facility had been completed, the GTR representative confirmed that there would be two trains per hour throughout the day;
- The Portfolio Holder for Economy, Enterprise & Transport commented that he had been in discussion with County Councillor Derrick Ashley (HCC Executive Member with responsibility for Public Transport matters), who shared Members' concerns regarding the condition of Stevenage Railway Station. Business leaders also felt that the Station was a very poor gateway to the town. County Councillor Ashley would be pursuing the issue of potential improvements to the Station at a higher level;
- A Member considered that, as well as the look of the Station, there were a number of practical issues that needed addressing, including the improved availability of the toilets and lifts (both of which were frequently closed); the robustness of the entrance/exit gates, which often broke down due to the volume of commuters during busy periods; and the number of empty shop units on the concourse. The GTR representative appreciated the issues raised and advised that Gregg's would shortly be opening one of those shop units;
- In response to a Member's question regarding the level of digital services on the ECML, the NR representative stated that there were currently no digital signals on the line. The use of digital signals would be piloted between Moorgate and Drayton Park stations before being rolled out to the remainder of the ECML. However, the current fleet of trains was digitally ready, and so there would be no need for a fleet upgrade once the signals had been upgraded;
- In response to a further question, the GTR representative confirmed that once the Stevenage Turnback facility had been completed and the 5th platform was operational, the journey times to and from Moorgate would not be drastically quicker, possibly a few minutes per journey;

- A number of Members commented that the GTR service had been much more reliable since the Summer timetable had been introduced.

In terms of the widespread desire to improve the appearance of Stevenage Railway Station, the HCC Principal Engineer – Transport Policy & Monitoring commented that this was an issue that could be raised as part of the process when the Thameslink franchise was renewed (currently planned for 2021).

It was **RESOLVED** that the updates on the Stevenage Turnback (5th Platform) project, the Govia Thameslink Spring 2019 timetable and the wider works along the East Coast Main Line in support of the King’s Cross remodelling project be noted.

4	URGENT PART 1 BUSINESS	
	None.	
5	EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS	
	Not required.	
6	URGENT PART II BUSINESS	
	None.	