

## **FGW Customer Panel (East) 11.10.07, Novotel, Reading**

### **Questions previously put by Gerald Dawe (GD) to FGW: (Verbal answers by Lesley Colman, Customer Liaison Manager, FGW) (LC)**

- (1) the very thin connection times at Newport from FGW from Paddington to Arriva trains Hereford (we have had instances recently where a person was left waiting for an hour because the FGW train was c. 5 minutes late and the connection was missed. Perhaps these are amended in your new timetable).

*LC: Railplanner would not give this connection time (it is too short). The marked connection gives c. 35 minutes between FGW arrival and Arriva departure (meaning that the wait would not normally be more than c. 30 minutes). (LC hinted that there were problems getting Arriva to agree longer gaps in-between changes at Newport.)*

- (2) Another connection time problem at Hereford. We came back via FGW in the evening and saw a lot of people off-load. During the journey the train manager stated that they were attempting to hold the Arriva connection to Abergavenny for 2 minutes. Needless to say the Arriva train left and the passengers were waiting there, on the platform, for approx. an hour until the next train to Abergavenny connection. Now: the FGW train, having finished its service, went on to stabling in Bristol via Abergavenny, Newport etc. Why is it not possible to have the service operating for another hour or two? It would have made things so much easier for these greatly inconvenienced passengers. I appreciate that the geographical areas of the two franchises don't overlap but surely, there needs to be flexibility built in to permit passengers to travel through and for the train staff to do overtime to cater for this emergency situation.

*LC: Problem is with the rostering (and 'diagrams'). The driver has to have a half-hour break at Hereford, before he can carry on with passengers. In theory he could do this, and continue. (GD notes: may be hardly worth it, if the scheduled train was due to leave within the hour.)*

- (3) Despite FGW's excellent 'quiet carriages' they are still firmly occupied by people listening to their own personal (audible) headphones, and starting up mobile phone conversations. No FGW personnel intervene to emphasise the fact that they are banned in this particular carriage, leaving it up to quiet carriage occupants to get stressed undertaking the operation for themselves.

*LC: Glenda (Director) is very aware of this issue. Sometimes users of mobile phones are tetchy and say they will phone customer services to complain about their treatment, even when they're told mobile phones aren't allowed in the quiet carriage. Problems over FGW performance (e.g. trains running late) have meant that their train managers have tended to stay off pressuring people. Also trains are often crowded and/or people are booked into carriage A: they then use mobiles / stereos. (GD said to Lesley that there would be a lot of support for telling people to shut up. She agreed.)*

### **Notes on the rest of the meeting on 11.10.07 at Novotel, Reading:**

Mike Carroll (former MD, FGW) introduced himself as acting Customer Services Director and interim Route Director, London and Thames Valley. He was one of the Directors at FGW which got the first FGW franchise.

Richard Rowland gave presentations on performance and the proposed December 2007 timetable.

-there was general disquiet about 'airline' style seats (though currently, the train-sets are made up of a high density layout: it will be better on later versions of the HSTs re-fitted)

In answer to a question by GD, RR confirmed that Oxford's Travel Centre (now closed) is going to become part of a larger number of ticket / information windows, as the station is redeveloped by FGW.

500+ cycle sheds will be installed across the network.