

Press Release: 27th May 2011
By Parry People Movers Ltd
Our response to the report
'Realising the potential of GB Rail'

Contact: John Parry MBE
Parry People Movers Ltd
Overend Road
Cradley Heath
West Midlands B64 7DD

Class 139 Railcars at Stourbridge Junction



Parry People Movers' lightweight rail technology, successfully introduced into full passenger service in 2009, has proved itself to be fully in line with the proposals for Britain's regional rail system contained in Sir Roy McNulty's report which was published on 19th May. The report, entitled 'Realising the Potential of GB Rail' outlines a number of ways in which the overall cost of providing train services can be reduced. However, the aim is firmly to retain and enhance services for passengers and freight users - not to take the 'easy option' of cutting services and closing lines.

The conclusion must be that railways should be operated in the most efficient way possible, which includes taking account of the fundamental differences between heavily-used commuter services, high-speed inter-city services and more local trains that provide essential transport links for many people around the country.

Emphasising this differentiation, the McNulty report includes an entire section entitled 'The lower-cost regional railway', with recommendations for maintaining services while reducing costs. Key to cost-reduction is practical recognition of the potential for different operation and engineering approaches for lines that combine the features of relatively low speed and relatively low passenger numbers. Suggestions include the use of different standards, lighter rolling stock and new approaches to operation on suitable lines.

This contention is not based upon just a theory, a model of this approach can already be seen - and is used by half a million passengers annually. For the past two years, rail services on the short branch line between Stourbridge Junction and Stourbridge Town have used lightweight Parry People Movers railcars which have reduced operating costs by half and cut carbon emissions by two-thirds. While part of the London Midland franchise, operation of these railcars is undertaken in a way that is entirely appropriate to the branch line, and all maintenance is carried out locally at the Junction station so they never need to be away from the route. Each railcar weighs just a quarter of the heavy diesel trains that used to provide the same service (albeit less frequently and considerably more noisily than now), giving a benefit in reduced damage to the track, leading to lower maintenance costs.

The railcars are kept running by a specially created subcontractor to London Midland, Pre Metro Operations Ltd, operating with procedures which are appropriate to the simple, low risk nature of a short branch line operation.

If normal rail standards had been applied, the same service today would cost much more, be noisier and more polluting, would run less frequently and be less popular with passengers.

Reliability and punctuality of the Stourbridge Town service has consistently been better than industry norms: In the most recent full operating year passengers have experienced almost 100 percent dependability including during periods of extreme winter weather, seen as a remarkable achievement by industry experts.

The McNulty report exposes the need for pilot projects to confirm the cost saving potential for a lightweight, less complex approach to short line passenger services. By building on the success of the Stourbridge Model and extending Parry People Mover services on to adjacent freight lines, the industry will create a template to be used for wider replication.

The Chairman of Parry People Movers Ltd, John Parry MBE, welcomed the McNulty report as perceptive and timely. It is excellent to have it confirmed from such an authoritative source that a rail technology need not be big and complicated to be effective, and that being fit for purpose is a sounder principle than one size fits all.

Tel: 01384 569553

Email:

info@parrypeplemovers.com



www.parrypeplemovers.com