

# Munich in view

LOCAL ACTION

## West Midlands

By Peter Cousins

peter-r.cousins@virgin.net

### Future rail investment priorities examined

Railfuture members will be studying the latest Network Rail draft rail utilisation strategy which sets out the priorities for future investment in the West Midlands and Chiltern area. The RUS was published by Network Rail on 11 November and contains good news for passengers on several routes. The RUS confirms there is a business case for a half-hourly service from Birmingham New Street to Worcester and that this should be extended as a new local service to Tamworth where a turnback facility would be provided. Plans for new stations at Kenilworth and Aldridge are also supported, subject to detailed studies which are likely to include an extension of the electrified network to Aldridge where a new bay platform would be provided. Local aspirations for new stations on the Midland line at Castle Bromwich and on the Camp Hill line at Kings Heath and Moseley are included but an earlier proposal for a privately funded station at Brinsford is not discussed as no funding is currently available. The expected growth of intermodal freight from a new port planned near Bristol has helped to make the business case for reopening the mothballed Stourbridge-Walsall freight line, which will enable many freight services to avoid the Lickey incline. This is very welcome news as reopening this line has figured on Railfuture's list of aspirations for many years.

### Backing for Stratford-upon-Avon reopening plan

The benefits of reopening the six mile long Stratford-upon-Avon to Long Marston rail line have been endorsed as technically feasible in a report by independent consultants JMP. The Shakespeare Line Promotion Group commissioned the report which concludes that reinstating the line could connect the West Midlands and Cotswold rail networks.

The SLPG says it would boost tourism in Stratford and help reduce traffic through surrounding villages. From Long Marston, trains could use existing track to Honeybourne to connect to the Worcester-London line. The SLPG commissioned the independent consultants after sending copies of its own report to councillors urging them to press for the scheme to be included in Warwickshire County Council's local transport plan. The 20-page report by Birmingham-based JMP details how the scheme fits in with objectives for economic, environmental and mobility improvements. Alan Bevan, secretary of the promotion group, said: "The report has been commissioned to secure independent, authoritative advice and this important evidence on the value of the rail scheme has now been forwarded to the local authorities. The JMP study is an important professional contribution to our voluntary lobbying endeavours." JMP's report recommends the county council carries out a full investigation of its own. Railfuture's Fighting Fund made a £500 grant to SLPG, as a contribution towards the cost of the JMP study.

### Ambitious plan to speed up trains in the Stafford area

At an exhibition at Stafford in November, Network Rail showed three options for a new flyover at Norton Bridge junction, aimed at speeding up trains north of Stafford. The scheme, which could be complete by 2016, will enable CrossCountry and London Midland services bound for Stoke-on-Trent and Manchester to avoid the present conflicts with southbound services on the West Coast main line at this busy junction. An 850-yard freight loop is also planned. More information: [www.networkrail.co.uk/asp/11047.aspx](http://www.networkrail.co.uk/asp/11047.aspx)



Railjet train which serves Vienna and Budapest at Munich



Double-deck DB train at Munich in 2009 with an Arriva train which operates services to Hof and Furth im Wald. DB has since taken over Arriva



Two different version of DB's inter-city expresses at Munich

# MUNICH



Six nights in Germany

RDS Group Travel visit  
by high-speed trains from London

16-22 May 2011

For details, send an SAE to Trevor Garrod,  
15 Clapham Road South, Lowestoft NR32 1RQ