

EGM Background

The Northern Ireland government, as well as the Irish government, are introducing new railway safety legislation. In Northern Ireland this new legislation will bring railways into line with those in the rest of Great Britain. One of the requirements of this new legislation is that passenger-carrying vehicles must be of the Mk2 design.

To address this issue, four possible options were considered by Council:

	<i>Option</i>	<i>Pros</i>	<i>Cons</i>
1	Hire Mk2 "Gatwick" stock from NIR	No capital outlay. No storage requirements.	No period atmosphere. No RPSI identity. No diner/shop facilities. Convert locos to air braking. Not always available.
2	Buy RPSI "Gatwick" stock	RPSI identity. No reliance on NIR/IÉ. Fit out internally as desired.	Acquisition/modification costs. On-going maintenance. Storage. Lack of period look with locomotives.
3	Buy ex-NIR Mk2 stock	RPSI identity. Long-term acceptability. Can be fitted with steam heating, vacuum brakes, opening windows. Low purchase price.	Cost of known repairs. Cost of brake modifications. Cost of central door locking.
4	Buy Irish Rail Craven stock	No modification required to brakes or heating. Generator for heating not required. More steam age look.	Cost of proving crash-worthiness. Cost of coupling modifications. Cost of central door locking. Doubts over availability date.

Giving due consideration to all the above and with the deadline of 1st January 2004, set by NIR in our new operating agreement, getting closer every day, the Council decided that the best option was to acquire NIR's ex-Enterprise service Mk2 coaches and return them to traffic for operation with the Society's locomotives on Society trains. The Council has also decided to invite the Lancastrian Carriage and Wagon Works of Heysham to examine the Mk2 vehicles already at Whitehead to assess the work that would be required to bring them back into service, and to quote for carrying out that work.

In order for the work to be done, regardless of which option is selected, a considerable amount of money will be required. Therefore, the Council is seeking to be released from the restriction placed on it at the 1998 AGM, whereby any allocation of the NIO compensation fund must be referred to an EGM.