



Dear Sirs

Timetable 2018: *Submission by APTU (The Association of Public Transport Users)*

APTU (The Association of Public Transport Users) is the rail user group for passengers between West Hampstead Thameslink and Harlington inclusive. Our response has been informed by prior feedback from our members on the issues that matter to them.

Late night timetable

1. **(Dislike): 23:43 from St Pancras only runs to West Hampstead:** This service should extend to Luton calling at Mill Hill Broadway, Elstree & Borehamwood, Radlett, St Albans, Harpenden, Luton Airport Parkway, and Luton. This change should also be applied to the 22:13 and 22:43.
2. **(Like): All stations train late evening frequency increase:** The provision of 3 or 4 trains per hour for the all stations service until 00:18 (currently 21:57) [St Pancras times].
3. **(Dislike): Gap between 00:18 and 01:01 at St Pancras on the all stations service:** An equivalent of the current 00:34 needs to be provided. The 00:31 fast service should be retained as such; if essential, a stop at Elstree could be considered.
4. **(Dislike): Early Hours of Monday service:** See point '6' on Sunday timetable.

Note: We do strongly welcome extensions in service frequency between 22:00 and 23:30.

Saturday timetable

5. **(Like): Northbound fast train late evening frequency increase:** The provision of 4 trains per hour for the St Albans & stations to Bedford service until 22:51 (currently 22.04). Consideration should be given to stopping all 4 services at West Hampstead in the late evening (eg from around 22:00) to better serve the London West End late night economy (ie as happens on a Sunday).
6. **(Like): All stations train late evening frequency increase:** As per '2' in Late night timetable.
7. **(Dislike): Gap between 00:18 and 01:01 at St Pancras on the all stations service:** - see '3' in Late night timetable.
8. **(Like): Operation of the Luton – Rainham service:** We welcome provision of this service.
9. **(Dislike): Termination of Rainham Services at West Hampstead at 22:51 and 23:21:** These services should be extended to Luton as semi-fast services.
10. **(Like): Southbound late evening frequency increases:** We welcome these increases.

Sunday timetable

1. **(Dislike): Extension of Central London Core closure to 09:26 (southbound service timing).** We comment on this in more detail below.
2. **(Like): Northbound fast train late evening frequency increase:** The provision of 4 trains per hour for the St Albans & stations to Bedford service until 22:34 (currently 20:48).
 - It would be good if one more West Hampstead, St Albans and stations to Bedford service could be provided after the current last service (23:36)
3. **(Dislike): Midland Mainline operating as a two track railway until around 12:00.** We comment on this in more detail below.
4. **(Like): Provision of semi-fast service until 2155 (St Pancras time):** Thus giving Mill Hill Broadway, Elstree & Borehamwood and Radlett 4 trains per hour.

5. **(Dislike): What would be the 22:25 semi-fast service from St Pancras terminates at West Hampstead:** It would be good if this service could extend the service pattern by 30 minutes by running to Luton.
6. **(Dislike): Early hours of Monday service:** We note that the service for the early hours of Monday for the northbound service from St Pancras is hourly. We believe it needs to replicate the 2 trains per hour service of other days. The timetables provided do not cover the southbound early hours service, but this too should be 2 per hour. We are not privy to the passenger loadings at Luton Airport, but suspect that Monday morning early flights are at least as busy as other weekdays.

Sunday timetable – Central London core closure until 09:26

We have received an additional briefing on the background to the extension in hours of the weekly closures. Whilst we understand the rationale, and recognise that passenger numbers are lower at this time, this extension will have noticeable impacts; for instance:

- It will not be possible to catch through trains for flights from Gatwick departing before around 12:30pm (allowing 15 minutes for delays and around 75-90 minutes to get from platform to boarding lounge, including security) [first Gatwick arrival is at 10:10].
- Days out in Brighton cannot start before 10:47am.

In both these cases, these are powerful dis-incentives to travel by train, leading to lost fare opportunities – indeed this extension in duration generally discourages use of the train for any long days out where the destination is south of the Thames.

We consider it essential that the need for the extended duration is reviewed at regular intervals, and in particular reviews are carried out:

1. In April / May 2018, after detailed working schedules have been prepared for maintenance work, with a potential change target of late July in ready for the summer holidays.
2. In time for the December 2018 timetable change.
3. In time for the May 2019 timetable change.

Even if it is concluded that the current start time of 07:10 cannot be achieved, any earlier start will open up important through journey opportunities. Whilst there is no ‘magic’ time for providing through services to Gatwick, provision of first arrivals at destinations like Brighton even 30 minutes earlier would be an incentive.

During times that the Core is closed, passengers should be given maximum flexibility for their journey. In particular, their tickets need to be:

1. Valid on the underground between West Hampstead, St Pancras, Victoria, Blackfriars and London Bridge.
2. Valid on Gatwick Express services, so as to maximise flexibility and travel choices.
3. Valid on the TfL 63 Bus between St Pancras and Blackfriars.

For passengers with special needs, it needs to be standard practice that a suitable taxi is provided for the cross London journey during these times.

Finally, we observe that we consider it be better that the extension in closure hours occurs by adding time to the end, rather than the beginning.

Sunday timetable – Midland Mainline operating as two track railway until 12:00

This requirement means it is not possible to provide more than two trains per hour for Radlett, Elstree & Borehamwood and Mill Hill Broadway until the 12:21 from Radlett. As with the core closure duration above, the need for this length of restricted running should be regularly reviewed; in particular, it should be reviewed in late summer 2018 for consideration of changes in December 2018 or May 2019.