

Dear Neil

This newsletter is a follow on from our letter of 5 November, and picks up a number of items that I did not have time to write about if I was going to get the newsletter out that evening.



Lack of drivers

I have nothing additional to report, although the issue has been a “headline” in the media over the weekend (it is 6th in popularity on the BBC News web site as I write). I am sure this will increase the pressure on FCC to negotiate a settlement.

Quality of Train information

I, and a number of members, have noticed a drop off in the quality of next train information on the indicators in recent weeks. In particular:

- Delays are announced very late (at City Thameslink, often after the scheduled departure time).
- Short formations are not always publicised.
- Cancellations are not always being made updated on a timely manner.

Please can you let us know about your problems so APTU can understand how prevalent the problem is.

Timetable changes

There are only minor changes to the timetable north of the river in the December timetable change. The main change, a reduction in services calling at London Bridge, is caused by major timetable changes on Southern and South Eastern (part of franchise commitments). The main implications are:

- AM peak - Northbound - no change
- AM peak - Southbound - no change
- PM peak - Northbound - 16:42 no longer calls at London Bridge
- PM peak - Southbound - 2 fewer services call at London Bridge - from St Albans, these are at 16:50 & 17:10 (some of the pre-publicity has talked about 4 not stopping, but these are the only two I can find).

Other than this, there is a bit of swapping around of destinations south of the river and various changes of a couple of minutes. Two of the trains that previously started at Elephant & Castle now start at Brighton. These pass through St Pancras at 17:32 and 18:32. In the APTU area, these stop at St Albans, Harpenden & Luton.

The December timetable is now on the FCC web site.

January 2010 Fares

Regulated fares will reduce by 0.4% in January. FCC round fares to the nearest 10p, so a few will not change. They have also said that most unregulated fares will not change, but I do not have details.

2 January will also see Oyster Pay As You Go accepted for stations from Elstree & Borehamwood to Cricklewood inclusive, and also stations in South London including the Wimbledon Loop and

East Croydon (Oyster Pay as You Go is already valid West Hampstead to London Bridge / Elephant & Castle).

Super Off peak

This summer promotion which gave 20% off weekend point to point and travelcard fares has been made permanent. However, there have been a number of issues with obtaining the discount from fares machines, so do check.

Carnets

Carnets - 10 singles for the price of 9 will be available soon at gated stations (Bedford, Luton, Luton Airport & St Albans). They are already available at some GN route stations.

Stakeholder Presentation

The following material is available on the web site

(<http://www.btinternet.com/~nlks/aptu/8nov2009newsletter.html>):

1. FCC's presentation (warning: 5Mb)
2. A list of works completed and planned by station (scanned image, 1Mb)
3. London Underground's presentation (0.5Mb)

Platform confusion at West Hampstead

Some members have fed back to us that there are problems at West Hampstead late in the evening when there are disruptions. The main problem occurs once all stations services start running through to Bedford, you need to be a real expert / regular to know (for instance) that the 22:23, 22:56 and 23:26 are all stations and the 22:11, 22:41 and 23:11 are fast. The position of the Next Train Indicators is such that they can't really be read from the entrance foot bridge. It doesn't matter quite so much when trains are running to time, because the first train is always the best bet - but if trains are delayed, the choice may not be clear.

Following discussions with Larry, he has arranged for manual announcements to be made after 10pm when there is disruption (the automatic announcements stop at 10pm). He & I explored a number of options for changing the information shown on the display boards at the station entrance, but none proved practical.

The new station entrance in Iverson Road is due to open in June 2010 and should provide an opportunity for improvements and I will watch out for these.

In the mean time, please send us any issues you have with announcement quality (or lack of them) at West Hampstead.

Brent Cross station

You may be aware of the plans for large scale regeneration in the Hendon / Brent Cross / Cricklewood area. These include a planned new station called Brent Cross. This is to be south of the North Circular roughly where the carriage sidings are. Such a station has two potential implications for users other than in the immediate area:

1. Slower all station trains
2. Possible closure or service restrictions at Cricklewood.

I have asked FCC for their view and the answer is that there is no official view. In particular, they have observed that:

- Timings for the Thameslink Programme do not include a Brent Cross stop. The initial indicators are that adding the stop is difficult to impossible if timings are to be kept. Extended timings may or not be possible - and may or may not require additional units.
- No decision has been made on closing Cricklewood if Brent Cross is opened (apparently Hendon is regarded as “safe”).

I have suggested to FCC that they should undertake the work (in conjunction with Network Rail) for allow a formal view to be formed.

The scheme does not yet have planning permission, and this will be considered by Barnet Council later this month. The Planning Committee is holding public meetings on the 18th & 19th November (6:30pm, Hendon Town Hall, The Burroughs). I am not clear exactly which body (Planning Committee, Cabinet or full Council) will make the decision and when this will happen. This may be because I have not fully studied the 902 page agenda for the meeting. After the Council makes it decision, I guess the Mayor and/or the Planning Inspectorate could become involved.

Key URLs are:

- Developer: www.brentcrosscricklewood.com (station map at tiny.cc/gP5Wy).
- Council’s regeneration page: tiny.cc/rPLsu (Planning meeting announcement: tiny.cc/14Gtn; 902 page agenda at tiny.cc/AC0ao & tiny.cc/8mWiw).

If any member attends, any feedback would be appreciated. APTU will continue to monitor the situation and seek to form a view once the possible implications for our service are known.

Regards

Neil

Neil Middleton
8 November 2009