



Dear member

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### Olympic update

I’ve been hearing reports from time to time of overcrowded services, particularly early in the morning and late at night - from what I can see, whilst the 4 fast and 4 slow trains per hour service is in operation, train loadings are tolerable, but if there is a big influx of travellers at other times, this can lead to overloading. FCC have prioritised 11:00-12:00 (midnight) over 10:00-11:00. Rail User Groups (and others) are receiving a daily update from FCC and it is clear from this that FCC are reacting to late running events - eg there was an additional service at 02:30 this morning, all stations to Bedford because of late running Volley Ball, and on other evenings services have been held back.

For Thameslink, the FCC plan has been to strengthen existing services; for GN they have run a number of additional late night services. This is because there are more services on Thameslink after about 23:30, compared to GN.

The official FCC advice is that Olympic Park travellers should change at Farringdon, not St Pancras. This is because the view was that the Javelin service would be very crowded. Originally, I thought this was un-necessary, but I have recently heard of substantial queues, so this could well be a smart move. After Farringdon, my personal view would be Tube to Liverpool Street and then National Rail to Stratford; the “official” advice from The Games Transport Communication Centre is that it asked FCC to promote travel from Farringdon to West Ham, which is just under 900m from the entrance to the Olympic Park.

### The coming week

When I travelled to work on Friday, there was a noticeable increase in Olympic spectator travellers compared to earlier in the week; I think this was because of the start of the Athletics. I shall be interested to see what the morning loads are like this week.

My key message is do not assume that last week’s travel demand is the same as this week.

### Thameslink Franchise consultation

APTU, together with BCA and Rail Future, will be responding to the Department for Transport (“DfT”) consultation on the Thameslink franchise.

From the perspective of a Rail User Group, answers to many of the questions are clear, and some of the questions are not relevant (we will not be expressing a view on the future of services to [Newhaven Marine](#)!).

There are two key aspects APTU is interested in member's views on:

### **Destinations south of the River**

Both APTU and BCA are strongly of the view that East Croydon, Gatwick Airport and Brighton should continue to be served by 4 trains per hour from Thameslink North. We think East Croydon is an important destination, both as an employment centre and as a location with services to many other locations. Gatwick Airport speaks for itself (or perhaps, more precisely, the M25 speaks on its behalf!). Brighton also has significant through traffic.

We are not clear as to where the remaining 4 trains per hour should go to - currently they all go to the Wimbledon loop.

In previous Newsletters, we have asked about these services and received no response, so if there is anyone out there who is keen for the service to be retained, do let us know. As you may have seen in the press, there is a vociferous campaign underway in South London to encourage the DfT to specify that Wimbledon Loop services continue to service the core.

In the absence of strong demand (or indeed any demand) from APTU members for the service to continue to serve the Wimbledon Loop, the question arises as to where else they might go. In theory we can nominate almost any destination we like in London or South East England from Portsmouth to Dover, but in practice, I think the limitation is to Metro services that can be reached via Elephant & Castle as I think around 50% of paths through London Bridge are, in practice, reserved for Great Northern services. From Elephant & Castle, the following destinations are possible:

- Wimbledon loop
- Lewisham + destinations to the Medway Towns including Dartford
- Bromley South + destinations to Sevenoaks & Orpington (currently, this service terminates on at Kentish Town Monday to Friday)
- West Croydon & East Croydon
- Epsom, Leatherhead & Guildford (long term travellers may recollect that this service operated in British Rail days).

APTU and BCA have debated whether we should be seeking a wide variety of destinations (eg 1 train per hour to 4 destinations) and have concluded that it is better to have more trains to one destination as the service starts to approximate "turn up + go". We understand from comments in the train operating community that more services to fewer destinations is easier to operate.

#### **Questions:**

1. Do you agree with East Croydon / Gatwick / East Croydon as an essential destination set?
2. Other than East Croydon / Gatwick / East Croydon, what destinations would you like Thameslink North services proceed to?
3. Do you have a strong preference for fewer trains per hour to more destinations?
4. Do the handful of peak hour evening services to South Eastern destinations such as Ashford and Rochester matter to anyone on Thameslink North? (it is a different matter for City users ...)

Finally, on this topic, I should emphasise that APTU is not currently against Thameslink North services going forward to the Wimbledon Loop - we are simply neutral on this matter.

### **Lack of capacity during the blockade of London Bridge**

During the blockade of London Bridge, which is due to start in 2015, all Thameslink services will be diverted to run via Elephant & Castle. The journey time to Brighton will increase by around 7 minutes. The diversion will have the following main implications:

1. The Thameslink service requirement will increase by around 4 train sets (2 \* 2), as each service terminating at Brighton/Bedford will return on the service after the one it currently returns on - eg the 11:34 from Brighton arrives at Bedford at 13:49 and can form the 14:10 to Brighton. During the diversion, it will need to form the 14:24.
2. Stock & Brighton Main line capacity will need to be found for a replacement London Bridge to East Croydon / Gatwick Airport / Brighton service - it is of note that outside the peaks, FCC provides the entire fast service between East Croydon and London Bridge.

This problem will need to be solved for two scenarios - when the new franchisee is just operating current FCC services and when it is operating both current Southern and current FCC services.

Naturally, APTU will argue for no reduction in our services during this period. However, it will be useful to know APTU member's views on a number of possible options if this is impossible. In descending order, APTU believes that these service features need retention:

1. Twelve car trains during the rush hour. These have been full and standing between St Pancras and St Albans (particularly in the morning peak) for some time and we would not wish to see any reduction in capacity.
2. Four trains per hour to Gatwick Airport. Much travel to/from this airport is time sensitive and we would not want to see any reduction, from both demand and from the service gaps that could be caused by problems on a service interval of every 30 minutes.
3. Four trains per hour to Brighton. The arguments for this are similar to '2' but not to quite the same strength.

We will also suggest that responsibility for the East Croydon <> London Bridge fast service transfers to existing Southern Franchise for the period before the combined Franchise, arguing that it (Southern) has a much larger supply of trains. I can see this being a point of tension, as not only are there unit shortages to cope with, Brighton travellers can no doubt assemble a good case for retention of a through Brighton <> London Bridge service, a source of units and line capacity being turned back of some FCC services at Gatwick Airport.

### **Questions:**

1. Do you agree with our prioritisation?
2. Are there any other current service features that are particularly important to you?

### **Consultation - Other aspects**

The full consultation can be downloaded from here: <http://www.dft.gov.uk/consultations/dft-2012-23/>. A list of the 33 questions is at the end of this newsletter; if you have any strong views on particular questions, please do let the APTU Committee know.

The deadline for submissions is 23 August; due to holidays, comments should be with APTU by 14 August at the latest, and preferably earlier.

## Carnet tickets

I and other committee members have spoken to FCC following complaints from a number of members and others.

FCC used to sell Carnets as 10 tickets that could be used in either direction. FCC stopped selling these because they were causing high levels of fraudulent travel (some travellers were re-using the tickets as they were not retained by the barriers in central London). They were replaced with 5 return journeys, either all peak or all off-peak. These do not help anyone who wants to routinely travel one way peak and the other off-peak.

I also raised the subject with FCC at the recent Stakeholder Forum, pointing out that this change further penalised regular travellers for whom the traditional season ticket is not appropriate - this group had already lost out through the introduction of an evening peak at the start of the Franchise.

FCC confirmed that this would be addressed in the near future, with the addition of two new combinations - Peak towards London and off-peak return and vica-versa. FCC provided this update yesterday:

Passengers will be able to buy either five or ten carnet tickets in one direction only. They will be available for either peak or off-peak travel. This means that customers will be able to buy, for example, 5 or 10 peak or off-peak ticket into London and 5 or 10 peak or off-peak tickets from London. Once bought the tickets can be mixed and matched, as before.

Testing is currently underway. I suggest that you advise APTU members that the carnet tickets will be re-launched during September. I'll give you a firm launch date in week commencing 18 August.

We will monitor the situation and apply further pressure if needed.

## Bought a ticket from a ticket machine on Monday 4 or Tuesday 5 June?

If you bought a ticket from a ticket machine on either of these days then you may have been charged the Off-Peak, rather than the correct Super Off-Peak fare.

If you paid by Credit / Debit Card, the money is being refunded to your card automatically; if you paid cash, you should visit a ticket office, bringing with you any evidence you have that you bought a ticket.

## Parking

FCC changed parking suppliers at very short notice on 1 June (from NCP to APCOA); as a result there have been ongoing problems with payment for parking with anything other than cash. FCC tell us that problems have now been addressed.

If you received a parking fine during this period that you think was unjust and FCC have refused your appeal, please let the APTU know, including key details (when, why etc ...\_)

## Radlett Strategic Freight Interchange

This decision has been delayed again; this time there is no revised date, so it will impossible for the Government to miss it ...

## Performance & FCC News

FCC held a Stakeholder session on 11 July. If you are interested in the presentation, it is available here: [www.aptu.org.uk/pdfs/fcc\\_stakeholderpresentation\\_11072012.pdf](http://www.aptu.org.uk/pdfs/fcc_stakeholderpresentation_11072012.pdf) (PDF file, 1.3Mb, 45 pages).

### Recent performance

FCC have commented as follows:

#### 27 May to 23 June

FCC's overall PPM for Period 3 was 89.88%, which did not meet our overall target of 91.81%. Overall delay responsibility for Period 3 across the entire network was as follows: FCC – 21%, Network Rail – 69%, other train operating companies – 10%. We are working in partnership with Network Rail to ensure delays are kept to a minimum.

Unfortunately the Thameslink service was affected by a number of infrastructure related incidents during Period 3. The largest incidents were:

- On 8 June an overhead power failure in the Kentish Town area caused disruption to the evening peak service
- A Network Rail vehicle derailed during engineering works in the East Croydon area on 30 May. This disruption caused significant delays to our morning peak service

As a result we missed our Thameslink route performance target with a result of 89.17% (target 91.58%)

#### 29 April to 26 May

Unfortunately we did not meet our overall PPM target for Period 2, which ran from 29 April to 26 May. FCC's overall PPM for Period 2 was 89.16%, which did not meet our overall target of 92.21%

We missed our Thameslink route performance target with a result of 86.93% (target 91.79%)

- On 11 May a number of signal failures in the Kentish Town area caused a significant number of delays.
- On 25 May an overhead power failure in the Leagrave area caused disruption to our evening peak services

Delay responsibility for Period 2 across the entire network was as follows: FCC – 19%, Network Rail – 70%, other train operating companies – 11%

## FCC Report – Reliability upgrade on Class 319s

FCC have reported as follows:

First Capital Connect has recently completed a reliability improvement programme on part of its Thameslink rolling stock, which will boost performance and reduce service failures.

The £3.1m programme, which commenced in late 2009, delivered modifications to all 86 of FCC's 23-year-old class 319 units. The improvements not only addressed component failures but also evaluated maintenance practices, fault finding techniques, and operations training.

Component modification improvements include:

- Desk panel and switch gear – New desk and modern switches to address failing components and poor reliability
- Roof canopy repairs – The roof canopy seals were stripped back and a new sealant applied to prevent leaks which often resulted in damage to electrical equipment
- Passenger door buttons – New LED door buttons which are more visible, reliable and compliant with latest accessibility standards

- Windscreen wiper equipment – The existing design has been optimised to provide greater reliability by replacing the arm and blade with a new design

The analysis of the upgrades has confirmed that performance on the class 319s could reach a reliability rate of 23,000 miles between failures compared to the past average of 13,000.

Regards

*Neil*

Neil Middleton

5 August 2012

## The Department for Transport's 33 questions on the Thameslink franchise

APTU does not plan to make any comment on questions in grey

Q.1	What improvements do stakeholders believe could be made on the combined franchise through partnership working between Network Rail and the new operator?
Q.2	Do consultees have any other specific aspirations for the new franchise that they wish to bring to the Department's attention?
Q.3	Are consultees aware of any other rail or non-rail development schemes that might affect the new franchise?
Q.4	What increments or decrements to the specification would stakeholders wish to see and how would these be funded?
Q.5	Which aspects of the specification, other than for those services operating through the Thameslink core route, would stakeholders wish to see mandated and which aspects of the specification could be left to the discretion of the operator?
Q.6	Are there other approaches to train service specification which you would prefer?
Q.7	What changes to services would stakeholders propose, what is the rationale for them and would these provide economic benefit?
Q.8	How might better use be made of the capacity currently available?
Q.9	What steps might bidders be expected to take to meet passenger demand and what might be the most appropriate mechanisms for managing demand?
Q.10	What destinations on the current Southeastern network do respondents think should be served by the combined franchise's services and what is the rationale for such proposals?
Q.11	How might better use be made of the capacity available on the Brighton Main Line?
Q.12	What steps should bidders be expected to take to improve performance on the route?
Q.13	What destinations on the Great Northern route do respondents consider would be appropriate to become destinations for trains which serve the core Thameslink route?
Q.14	Do respondents believe Great Northern trains which do not serve the Thameslink core route should remain as part of this franchise or be transferred to the new Inter City East Coast franchise?
Q.15	What improvements would respondents like to see made to Great Northern services as part of the combined franchise and what is the rationale for this?
Q.16	What services would be appropriate to serve the Airport market?
Q.17	What improvements could be made without adversely affecting the service provision on the remainder of the franchise?
Q.18	What services that run via Elephant & Castle do respondents think should run via the Thameslink core route?
Q.19	Recognising that not all of these services can run via the Thameslink core route, what would be the most satisfactory way of managing the interchange at Blackfriars?
Q.20	What improvements would respondents like to see made to Coastway East and West services, the rationale for such proposals and the economic benefit expected to be delivered from these changes?
Q.21	What improvements would respondents like to see made to other Southern services as part of the combined franchise from 2015, what is the rationale for such proposals and the economic benefit expected to be delivered from these changes?
Q.22	What are respondents' views on the practice of splitting trains at stations such as Haywards Heath?
Q.23	Do respondents feel that the Newhaven Marine branch line and station should be kept open and maintained or should the rail industry deploy the relevant funding elsewhere on the rail network?
Q.24	How would you like to see performance information published?
Q.25	How frequent should its publication be?

Q.26	What level of disaggregation of performance do you believe is reasonable?
Q.27	What are the priorities that respondents consider should be taken into account to improve the passenger experience of using these services?
Q.28	What do stakeholders see as the most important factors in improving security (actual or perceived) and addressing any gap between the two?
Q.29	What is important to stakeholders in the future use and improvements in stations?
Q.30	What priorities would respondents give to car parking and cycling facilities at locations where these are fully used?
Q.31	What sort of ticketing products and services would you expect to see delivered through 'smart' technology on this franchise?
Q.32	What local accessibility and mobility issues do stakeholders see and how they might be addressed?
Q.33	What environmental targets would stakeholders like to see within the franchise specification?