



Dear member

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## Thameslink Programme re-launch

Now that the Olympics are behind us, the Thameslink Programme formally re-launches. The focus of the works post Olympics is London Bridge and the immediate area. From a point sometime in 2015 for around 3 years, FCC services will not serve London Bridge. Instead, all East Croydon / Gatwick Airport / Brighton services will run via Herne Hill.

The Thameslink programme website re-launch occurs tomorrow; the URL remains [www.thameslinkprogramme.co.uk](http://www.thameslinkprogramme.co.uk). Please note you will need to re-register for future emails.

There are also a series of roadshows to explain the changes. These visit our stations as follows:

- St Albans: Monday 29 October, 17:00/19:30
- Luton: Tuesday 30 October, 17:00/19:30
- Harpenden: Thursday 8 November, 17:00/19:30

In central London, they are at London Bridge on various dates: see

[http://www.thameslinkprogramme.co.uk/news/news\\_items/view/142](http://www.thameslinkprogramme.co.uk/news/news_items/view/142) for dates.

### Implications of the Thameslink programme

As noted above Thameslink services will not call at London Bridge for around 3 years from sometime in 2015. Because the alternative (via Herne Hill) is longer - around 8 to 15 minutes - this means that the full Bedford - Brighton service requires around 4 additional units (assuming 8 carriage trains). There is also the need to supply units for the fast East Croydon <> London Bridge service, which is exclusively provided by FCC off-peak at present.

We commented on this in our Franchise response (see below) and are now waiting for a meeting with FCC in order to understand the latest situation and lobby for the best possible outcome.

### New Thameslink rolling stock order

As you probably know, the order for this has yet to be placed. Never the less, Siemens have been active in a number of areas, in order to keep at least some of the project on track. For instance, we hear that pile-driving at the new Depots has gone ahead.

The latest comment we have heard is this (Derby Telegraph - <http://goo.gl/gjWk1>):

Transport Secretary Patrick McLoughlin ..... speaking yesterday [I think this was Friday 26<sup>th</sup>], dismissed the calls for the contract to be reviewed. He said: "I really don't feel that there is any need to review any other decisions made by the department." ... "The way rail franchises are assessed is different to those such as rolling stock." .. "It also has to be remembered that the Thameslink bidding process was initiated

by the previous government." "We are still on course to sign the deal early next year." ... "Those who believe that it is still possible to review the decision are not dealing with reality."

Whilst APTU does not have an inside track on this subject, the franchise and rolling stocks are very different and so I don't think that the failures in the West Coast Franchise tender can be automatically be said to apply to the planned Siemens Contract; certainly the growth issue in the Franchise bid is much less relevant - the Siemens contract can be simplified to "Provide A trains a day for B years, starting from date C" (the planned Siemens contract is for the provision of in-service trains, rather than to build a specified number of trains).

There was also an update on delivery dates in Parliament last week:

- Chris Williamson (Derby North, Labour): To ask the Secretary of State for Transport  
(1) whether his officials have provided him in the last six months with an estimate of the date the new Thameslink rolling stock will be delivered; and what that date is;  
(2) whether his officials have provided him in the last six months with an estimate of the date the new Thameslink rolling stock will be delivered; and whether that date differs from that previously announced by his Department.
- Simon Burns (Chelmsford, Conservative)  
We expect the first trains to be delivered for testing on the network in summer 2015 and deployment of the full fleet to be completed towards the end of 2018.

[Hansard source (Citation: HC Deb, 25 October 2012, c1005W)]

When we hear more, we will let you know.

## Thameslink Franchise

As you have probably heard, the Thameslink / Great Northern / Southern franchise process was one of 3 other franchise bids that were placed on hold at the same time as the West Coast franchise was cancelled.

BCA and APTU are currently waiting to hear from FCC as to when it will be possible to meet Neal Lawson, MD at FCC to find out more about what this means practically. In the mean time, we have received this from the FCC bid team:

Dear stakeholder,

I am sure you are aware of the Department for Transport's recent announcement that they have cancelled the Inter City West Coast bid and put all other bids on hold pending an inquiry into the franchise letting process.

The DfT has made it clear that FirstGroup is in no way at fault for the errors in the West Coast process, having followed the due process correctly. FirstGroup submitted a strong bid in good faith and in strict accordance with the DfT's terms.

Whilst the details are to be confirmed, I can tell you that the DfT's announcement does not mean that our hard work on the Thameslink bid will stop. We remain fully committed to producing the best possible tender submission, once we know from the DfT what the next steps are. We aim to win this franchise and to provide you with a rail service you can be proud of.

As soon as I receive more information on how this decisions affects the Thameslink franchise timing I will let you know. If you have any questions regarding this process then please do not hesitate to contact me

APTU did respond to the Department for Transport's Franchise Consultation document; our response can be found here:

[www.aptu.org.uk/pdfs/thameslinkconsultationresponse\\_august2012.pdf](http://www.aptu.org.uk/pdfs/thameslinkconsultationresponse_august2012.pdf).

## Carnet tickets

Further to the article in the last newsletter, FCC have revised their Carnet ticket arrangements:

First Capital Connect (FCC) is making some further changes to its discounted books of Carnet train tickets in response to feedback from commuting part-time workers and regular leisure and business travellers who said the changes made in May this year did not offer the value for money or flexibility to meet their needs.

From Sunday 2 September 2012 Carnets, which give a 10% saving on regular 'Anytime Day Return' or 'Off-Peak Day Return' fares, will be sold as one-way single tickets in peak or off-peak booklets. This will enable customers to mix and match their peak and off-peak journeys depending on the time of day they are travelling.

To prevent fraud, the tickets will only be valid for the direction of travel shown on the ticket and will be retained by ticket gates at the end of a journey, which is why they were originally altered in May. To increase flexibility further, they are now available in booklets of five as well as ten Carnet tickets.

Customers can buy Carnet booklets from any National Rail station on the Thameslink North or GN route. They are also available from the First Capital Connect website [www.firstcapitalconnect.co.uk/carnet](http://www.firstcapitalconnect.co.uk/carnet).

*Customers must write, in permanent ink, the date of use in the boxes on the ticket before commencing their journey and must also use the correct ticket for the direction of travel.*

The full range of [Thameslink] gated stations from / to which Carnet tickets can be used is shown below.

- St Pancras International, Farringdon, City Thameslink, London Blackfriars, London Bridge, Elephant & Castle, Bedford, Leagrave, Luton, Luton Airport Parkway, Harpenden, St Albans

The comment in italics above "**Customers must write, in permanent ink, the date of use in the boxes on the ticket before...**" cannot be over-emphasised - my monitoring of consumer and rail web forums shows that letters indicating an intention to prosecute are sent out regularly when an undated Carnet ticket is offered to Revenue Protection staff and the excuse "I forgot", or "the date rubbed off" is often not accepted by FCC.

## December timetable changes

There are very few changes in December's timetable change:

- Weekdays
  - The 07:33 Bedford to Sutton service will be diverted to Brighton, calling at London Blackfriars, East Croydon, Gatwick Airport, Three Bridges, Haywards Heath and Brighton.
  - The 07:44 Bedford to Elephant & Castle service is extended to Sutton via Wimbledon, calling at London Blackfriars, Herne Hill and all stations to Sutton via Wimbledon. This service will no longer call at Elephant & Castle.
  - The 17:40 London St. Pancras International to Three Bridges service will start from Bedford at 16:40 and call additionally at Flitwick, Luton, Luton Airport Parkway, Harpenden and St. Albans.
- Saturdays
  - The 19:07, 19:37, 20:07 and 20:37 Brighton to Bedford services will call additionally at West Hampstead Thameslink at 20:41, 21:11, 21:41 and 22:11.

- The 17:54, 18:24 and 18:54 Bedford to Brighton services will also call additionally at West Hampstead Thameslink (at 18:45, 19:15 and 19:45).

### Bridge work at Harpenden Station

Installation works for the new footbridge at Harpenden will occur overnight on 3-4 November, 17-18 November, 24-25 November, 1-2 December, 8-9 December and 15-16 December.

Except for 24-25 November, this will involve partial closure of the east side (platform 1) car park. On 24-25 November, Station Approach and the West side Car Park will close for car access; pedestrian / cyclist access will be maintained, except during the crane lift in the early hours. The Taxi rank will temporarily relocate to adjacent to platform 1. This is the weekend of the Harpenden Christmas Lights on and FCC note that all of the East side car park will be available.

### January Fare rises

As you may well be aware, the Government capped regulated fare rises to RPI + 1% for January 2013 - they had originally been due to rise by RPI + 3%. At the time the RPI + 3% rise was announced, I was quoted in the Herts Advertiser ([www.aptu.org.uk/pdfs/hertsadvertiser23august2012.pdf](http://www.aptu.org.uk/pdfs/hertsadvertiser23august2012.pdf)) complaining about it. APTU will follow its usual policy of lobbying for the increase to be spread evenly.

### Finally ...

There is more to report, but as there is news about events in the next week, I decided to write now and then compose another newsletter for the remaining content.

Regards

*Neil*

Neil Middleton

28 October 2012