



Dear Member

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General

I still have a backlog of material, but wanted to get this newsletter out because of the forthcoming Stakeholder meeting (first item).

FCC Stakeholder Forum

There is a Stakeholder Forum this Thursday (31st); a particular area of focus for APTU's questions will be current performance and a franchise update (we'll look for a Thameslink Programme update [i.e. on Rolling Stock] as well, but usually FCC simply follow the Department for Transport "public line" [which is what I would be doing]).

If you have particular areas you would like us to follow up on, please let us know by Thursday lunchtime.

Summary of updates for the medium / long term – more details later in this newsletter

It has been a busy 6 weeks or so:

1. The Brown report on the future of Franchising has been issued. What happens next is not really clear, but comments "The upcoming Thameslink, Southern, and Great Northern (TSGN) franchise is likely to be most suitable for such a management contract arrangement."
2. The order for Siemens Desiro's has reached "Commercial close".
3. Southern Railway have ordered 116 new carriages. The industry talk is that these will be used on Thameslink routes for a short time, to allow 319s to be released before the new Siemens Desiro's arrive.
4. It looks like the Strategic Rail Freight Interchange at Radlett will proceed.
5. It has been confirmed that Wimbledon loop trains will continue to run through the core after 2018.
6. The Strategic Rail Freight Depot at the old Radlett Aerodrome is likely to proceed.



FCC reports: Winter is coming

FCC sent us this (before last week's snow):

With the South-East having seen icy conditions and some snow in the past few weeks, First Capital Connect's winter plans are in operation. Station car parks which are run by FCC and platforms have been regularly gritted and treated with de-icer by our contactors and staff.

We have plans in place to deal with more severe weather. Staff at key locations have been trained to operate mini snow blowers, which can quickly clear a large amount of snow from a platform. We also have our quad-bike ploughs, which were successfully deployed in 2010, ready to go at a moment's notice.

During extreme weather, we'll be operating our new winter resilience timetable. This can be activated at short notice when we know bad weather is on the way. It is intended to keep trains our running and to prevent too much disruption to passengers. The resilience timetable is designed to keep a number of our services running despite extremely difficult operating conditions. It incorporates separate timetables for the north and south of the Thameslink route to reduce potential disruption to those outside of the area affected by the severe weather.

FCC performance

FCC have reported as follows:

Period 10 – 9 December > 5 January

On the Thameslink route, 84.86% of trains achieved PPM against our target of 88.99%. This reflects that outside of major incidents, such as the signal fire near Brighton, performance on Thameslink was overall good, with PPM exceeding targets on a number of days.

This period, 64% of delays were caused by infrastructure or network issues within the purview of Network Rail, 13% of delays were due to other rail operators whilst 23% of delays were the responsibility of FCC.

Period 9 – 11 November > 8 December

Period 9 has been extremely challenging for us. We dealt with some major incidents, including one in which a person was struck by an East Coast train resulting in the East Coast Mainline being closed for several hours. There was also a train failure in Blackfriars station during the morning rush hour which resulted in a large number of delays throughout that day. As a result of these incidents we have come short of our overall target public performance measure (PPM) of 86.95%, missing it by 2.09%.

With severe delays affecting the Thameslink Route during this period, our PPM for the Thameslink route was 82.81%. The target PPM was 86.68%.

This month 26% of delays affecting FCC services were the responsibility of FCC, 15% of these delays were due to other train operators while 59% of delays were the responsibility of Network Rail. We are continuing to work with our engineering teams and Network Rail to reduce disruption.

Period 8 – 14 October > 10 November

Overall, despite an extremely challenging period we met our public performance measure target. The target for period 8 is 87.90%, reflecting the additional problems caused by autumnal and early winter conditions.

On the Thameslink route, our PPM was 88.44%, ahead of our target of 86.83%. Incidents on this route include trespassers on the line, emergency works to near Gatwick and mechanical failure in rolling stock.

This month 28% of delays affecting FCC services were the responsibility of FCC. 15% of these delays were due to other train operators while 57% of delays were due to Network Rail.

Period 7 – 16 September > 13 October

Following our record-breaking success in Period 6, we have remained ahead of our performance targets despite some major disruption on the network which had a negative impact on a number of services.



Overall, our public performance measure was 92.25%, ahead of our target of 91.86%.

On the Thameslink route we were able to exceed our performance target of 91.40%, with a PPM of 91.95%. There were several incidents outside of our control throughout the period, including a vehicle striking a bridge at Leagrave, a fatality at Gatwick and signalling problems at St. Pancras.

Just 24% of delays were caused by factors within FCC's control. 61% of delays during period 7 affected Network Rail infrastructure, while 14% were caused by other Train Operating Companies. We are continuing our work with Network Rail and other TOCs to reduce the impact of disruptions on passengers.

Period 6 – 19 August > 15 September

Period 6 was an excellent period for FCC's service performance, which saw the highest public performance measure (PPM) since the start of the franchise. Our overall public performance measure was 94.62%, which beat our target of 92.08%.

Overall delay responsibility was as follows: FCC – 26%, Network Rail – 62%, other train operating companies – 12-%. We are working in partnership with Network Rail to ensure delays are kept to a minimum.

The Thameslink service performance beat its target of 91.30% with an actual result of 94.41%. The largest incident affecting performance on the Thameslink route in Period 6 was an overhead power failure between St Pancras and Farringdon on 30 August. This incident caused a number of delays to our evening peak service.

Period 5 – 22 July > 18 August

The service we operated was good for Period 5 but a few incidents did affect performance. Our overall public performance measure was 91.14% and we just missed our target of 91.70%.

Overall delay responsibility for was as follows: FCC – 25%, Network Rail – 64%, other train operating companies – 11%. We are working in partnership with Network Rail to ensure delays are kept to a minimum.

The Thameslink service was affected by a few infrastructure related incidents and as a result our performance was measured at 90.10% (target 90.73%). The largest incident was a series of cable thefts in the Bedford area, which caused significant disruption to our Thameslink service on the 25th and 26th July. Network Rail worked very hard to rectify this fault and we are grateful to our customers for their patience during this particularly difficult time.

FCC post Olympic feedback

Although this is somewhat late, I think it still relevant:

Dear stakeholder,

Now that the London 2012 Games are over I would like to thank you for your trust and support. I am very pleased with the extra 1,050,260 seats we were able to provide; the Support Centre also worked very hard to ensure that both customers and stakeholders received timely and accurate reports on how our services were running and our volunteers from various offices made a real difference on the ground helping customers and visitors.

After such large events it is always important to reflect on the service we have provided to our customers. One area that worked particularly well was our @Firstcc Twitter service, which was staffed every day between 7am – 11pm. Our Social Media Team responded to over 10,000 tweets over the entire period. We know that customers welcomed the proactive messages we issued and we are therefore going to increase the amount of proactive information we put out through social media. I look forward to briefing you more in a few weeks' time once we have finalised our plans.

Our Communications Team would really appreciate your feedback regarding our performance during the Olympics and in particular the stakeholder updates you received. If you would like to provide due feedback then please contact us on the address below.



St Albans Cycle parking

At the November 2012 National Cycle-Rail Awards, First Capital Connect received the station of the year award for work at St Albans, as over the past year, they doubled the number of cycle parking spaces to more than 1,000.

FCC also report:

A new service for cyclists has launched at St Albans Station. Cycle Tech UK will be operating a bike clinic beside the car park every Monday and Wednesday from 0630 to 1900. Customers who have damaged bikes or just want their cycle serviced can drop them off at the Cycle Tech UK's mobile repair shop in the morning and collect the repaired or serviced bike in the evening. The successful launch of the scheme on 13 November saw representatives from Cycle Tech UK, First Capital Connect and the British Transport Police (BTP) talking to local cyclists about the facilities at St Albans. Members of the BTP also helped several cyclists add their bikes to BikeRegister, the UK's leading online bike security registry.

Cycle Tech also has a wide array of accessories for sale, from lights and high visibility clothing to spare tires and mud-guards, serving as a one-stop shop for the cycling enthusiast on the go.

Harpenden station

We have received this update from FCC before Christmas

The final span of the new footbridge at Harpenden was lowered into place at the weekend [15/16 December], between platform 1 and platforms 3/4 along with the staircase for platform 4 (see pictures below). We have been told there will be more crane lifts than I last advised you: one for the central island staircase this weekend and another for the final set of steps, for platform 1 on the east side, on 12 January (*APTU note: I think this is actually the other way round*). Network Rail's contractors will be following the usual procedures for this by lifting from the east side car park so there will be no closure needed of Station Approach and only minimal inconvenience.

The footbridge will then open in late January with the lifts following later, in the spring. The old bridge will be taken down too, possibly starting in February. I will give you an update closer to the date.

The bad weather meant that the final lift was postponed by two weeks and took place in the early hours of this morning.



Elstree & Borehamwood update

This station is also due to receive step free access under the "Access for All" programme, however the timetable for this has slipped significantly due to difficulties in obtain the access needed for the crane that will lift the various components into place.

I guess the arrangement will be similar to the current build Harpenden, which means that there will need to be 8 major lifts, with two or three taking place over a Saturday night / Sunday morning (Towers * 3, Steps * 3 & Spans * 2).



Cricklewood update

FCC have reported as follows:

As part of First Capital Connect's commitment to make our stations more accessible, we will be carrying out work to refurbish the ticket office at Cricklewood station. I would like to brief you on the improvements which will be incorporated into the new counter and the measures we are taking to avoid disruption to customers while work is being carried out.

Between 28 January and 1 February, the ticket office at Cricklewood will be closed for refurbishment. Existing ticket counters will be replaced with new dual height counters to aid those who are less mobile. New intercom systems will be installed, which will make it easier for all passengers to speak to ticketing staff. Induction loops will also be incorporated into the counter, improving the customer experience for those with hearing aids.

The temporary closure of the ticket counter while work is carried out may cause some disruption to customers, however we are doing our best to minimise this. Tickets will remain available from our ticket vending machine, and staff will be selling tickets in the foyer of the station during normal ticket office opening times.

Thameslink Programme – London Bridge works

There has been a slight update to this. Previously, the expectation is that Thameslink trains would stop serving London Bridge from early 2015. It is now December 2014; presumably from the timetable change which will be around 12 December. We have been quoted this:

- December 2012 - London Overground/East London line phase two opens coinciding with the withdrawal of Southern's South London line services between London Victoria and London Bridge via Denmark Hill. The timing of many other Southern trains will change from 9 December.
- May 2013 - Platforms 14-16 taken out of use to enable redevelopment work
- Spring 2014 - First two redeveloped platforms (14 and 15) open with new, longer canopies
- December 2014 to 2018 (subject to ongoing planning) - Thameslink route services to and from central London diverted away from London Bridge (via Herne Hill). Off-peak service to Brighton from London Bridge to be maintained
- 2015 to 2016 (subject to ongoing planning) - Trains to Charing Cross unable to call at London Bridge due to rebuilding of platforms 4-7
- 2015 - Station redevelopment reaches half way mark. All terminating platforms (10-15) due to be complete. First new Thameslink trains (for which Siemens is preferred bidder) expected to enter service
- 2016 - Platforms 4-8 complete allowing Charing Cross services to resume calling at London Bridge
- 2016 to late 2017 (subject to ongoing planning) - Trains to Cannon Street unable to call at London Bridge while platforms 1-3 rebuilt.
- December 2018 - Completion of work to station, track, signalling and major bridges around London Bridge

As regards the comment against 2015 - see later!

Brown report on Franchising

The Brown report was the second of two reports following the debacle over the West Coast Franchising and the subsequent suspension of all Franchise re-lets including Thameslink, Great Northern & Southern.



Currently, the expectation is that there will be an announcement next month on what is going to happen.

Some of the more important recommendations are as follows (extracts from the report):

- *The bidding process is not fundamentally flawed, but there is significant scope to improve it further*
- *Franchise term should be determined by the circumstances and size of each individual franchise should usually consist of a 7 to 10 year initial term with pre-contracted continuation*
- *Bids should also be explicitly scored on their proposals for improving service quality for passengers and their approach to management. Their score should form part of the evaluation process. ... I recommend that a weight of 20-40% (which will vary depending on the nature of the franchise)*

Generally, the concept of management contracts (this is Virgin Rail's current contract) is rejected, but the report does go on to comment *"There is a rather better case for management contracts where a franchisee is facing major and sustained disruption because of infrastructure works, and where revenue growth will be less important than maintaining services through the disruption..... The upcoming Thameslink, Southern, and Great Northern (TSGN) franchise is likely to be most suitable for such a management contract arrangement."*

The report goes on to make these points:

- *"I recommend that the Department should plan franchise competitions to follow an indicative 24 month timescale"* I think that, although it might be argued that we are part way through this process for the current renewal, it might be quite brave to re-use pre Laidlaw, pre-Brown work, particularly as it might need to be shown that this preparation work did not suffer the same problems as the West Coast Franchise did.
- *"I recommend this programme should stagger the competitions so that the Department is not seeking to award any more than 3 to 4 franchises in any one calendar year."*
- On the current franchises, the relevant text has, unfortunately, been redacted: *"[Paragraphs 8.13 to 8.20 have been temporarily redacted from this version of the report as they contain specific recommendations about the three live procurements that are potentially market sensitive and on which the Department intends to make an announcement shortly. These currently redacted paragraphs will be published as a Command Paper, Cm8527 Supplement to the Brown Review of the Rail Franchising Programme, immediately after this announcement has been made.]"*

As and when there is more news, we will let you know. If I was to speculate, an option might be to grant FCC a tactical extension of the current franchise in the form of a management contract (i.e. similar to the current Virgin Trains arrangement) and then to grant a longer management contract for the combined franchise after a competitive tender that starts when the current Southern Franchise ends in 2015.

Main Thameslink rolling stock order

The Siemens City Desiro order has now passed another milestone - what is being called 'commercial close'. This was said in the House of Commons on 20 December:

The Thameslink rolling stock contract is complex, as the hon. Gentleman understands, and it introduces much greater responsibility for the train's performance in service on the part of the train manufacturer



and maintainer than is traditionally the case. Therefore it has—quite rightly— taken some time to get the details right. Siemens and its partners in Cross London Trains have been working very closely with the Department for Transport to reach commercial agreement on the Thameslink rolling stock project. I am pleased to say that there has been substantive progress in recent weeks and the Department has now reached commercial agreement on the key elements of the deal with the Cross London Trains consortium. Last night the Cross London Trains consortium published its information memorandum to potential funders.

This important milestone enables the next stage of the process of further engagement with the debt market to continue to put the necessary financing in place for the deal. Our target, once the necessary credit approvals have been secured, is to reach financial closure as soon as possible in the new year.

If you have a couple of billion to spare, then there is someone who would like to hear from you To be more serious, I think the main issue will be the interest rate - I am sure the money can be borrowed as Debt markets are in generally good shape at present.

Interim Thameslink rolling stock order

Southern Trains has:

1. Ordered and financed an additional 40 carriages for their recent order with Bombardier
2. Launched a procurement for a further 116 carriages, with the possibility of a further extension of 140. These will be 110 mile per hour capable.

The key phrase in both cases is “will help enable the cascade of rolling stock envisaged as part of the Thameslink Programme”. Roger Ford of Modern Railways had this to say in December:

In the press release Southern added that it is ‘developing proposals’ with the Department for Transport for a ‘new procurement competition’ for 116 dual voltage 110 mile/h electric multiple unit vehicles. There is also an option for a further 100 vehicles.

Naturally, everyone wondered where these vehicles would run? And those who asked were told ‘dunno’. Southern is simply acting as a procurement agency for DfT and who can tell how their minds work?

Presumably the exercise is linked to the delayed cascade of Class 319 EMUs from Thameslink. As discussed in last month’s Informed Sources the first units are unlikely to be available before the end of 2016.

For a speculative requirement the number is precise. The 116 vehicles could be formed as 29 four car units. Technically, the 110mile/h capability is compatible with running on both the West Coast and Great Western main lines.

According to Southern the new procurement competition ‘will assist DfT’s ability to address the wider rolling stock needs of the country’. Note that ‘new procurement competition’. But if this is an urgent requirement it is unlikely that a new design could enter service in under three years from date of contract.

According to RailNews, the DfT had this to say: “If Southern progresses with the procurement, these 116 new vehicles, and potentially 140 more, could initially be used on the Thameslink routes. Once the expected new Thameslink trains are operational these carriages will be moved to the newly electrified routes, which could include the Midland Main Line to Corby and North Transpennine Routes.””

Strategic Rail Freight Interchange at Radlett.

The Secretary of State for Communities has given his go-ahead, in principle for this. We will try and find out more about the implications for passenger capacity & performance from FCC on Thursday.



By way of a reminder, the APTU position is that as a planning matter, it is outside our remit. We are interested only in ensuring that it has no impact on passenger services, including increased capacity from the Thameslink Programme. Our worries are twofold:

1. Any engineering work needed in the tunnels at Elstree and West Hampstead to allow 8 foot 6 inch containers to be carried - in particular, any works that might occur Monday to Saturday day time (The Sunday service already allows two tracks to be closed)
2. Any permanent degradation in the service.

If you are a Hertfordshire resident there are various e-petitions against the development.

Wimbledon Loop

The Government has decided that services from the Wimbledon Loop will continue to run through the core after 2018. Key points from the Government Statement include:

- The government has safeguarded the future of a popular south London rail service ahead of a major overhaul of the network, Rail Minister Simon Burns announced today. ... after extensive consultation with stakeholders and local rail users, the Department for Transport has worked closely with Network Rail to make sure the route continues to operate as part of Thameslink's core services.
- I [The Minister] am therefore extremely pleased that Network Rail have relooked at the plans and am confident this decision will provide benefits to rail users for years to come.
- Currently, 4 trains run every hour from Wimbledon Loop stations serving Merton, Morden, Sutton, Carshalton, Mitcham, Streatham and Tulse Hill, through to St Pancras International and beyond.
- Under the new proposals 8 Thameslink trains will run per hour via Elephant and Castle, including the 4 Wimbledon Loop trains, 2 from Sevenoaks via Bromley South and Catford, and 2 (peak only) from Maidstone East via Bromley South.

Apart from meaning that another community in South London will not have a through service, the main impact is a switch in the ratio "Via London Bridge | Via Elephant & Castle" from '18 | 6' to '16 | 8'. Network Rail have apparently promised that they will investigate the implications of this.

I have not seen any reliable statement on the north of the river destination of Wimbledon loop services after 2018, so it is conceivable they could switch to the Great Northern.

Again, we will see what FCC have to say.

Regards

Neil

Neil Middleton
28 January 2013