

Dear Friend

Welcome to a mini update.

In the newsletter sent last Sunday, I mentioned a meeting on 4 February for stakeholders to explain their preferred mix of stops for Thameslink Express Services – which two of the three possibilities of Luton, Harpenden & St Albans were wanted.



That meeting has now been rescheduled to 11 February.

I am sending you this mini-update for two reasons:

1. To ask that you complete the survey if you have not already done so – and ask others to do so as well, now that there is more time available.
2. To report back on key points from the meeting on Thursday 31 January 2019.

The Survey

Now that we have longer to consider options, we ask that you complete the survey if you have not already done so – **and ask friends, family, work colleagues etc who travel by Thameslink between St Pancras and Bedford to complete it. We are particularly keen to hear from those whose journey times are constrained** – they can't leave their home station until a set time (eg after dropping a child off at school / nursery) – and need to arrive at work for a set time. The survey can be accessed here: <http://www.surveymoz.com/s/JVJUT/> – and will now remain open until **11am Sunday 10 February**. If you have not already done so, please read the newsletter first (link below); if you need to refer to the Consultation document, this is on the [APTU Website](#).

Reporting back from the meeting

The meeting participants came to 4 broad conclusions:

1. That an equitable share of the stops was either 5:3:2 or 4:4:3 for St Albans, Harpenden & Luton respectively.
2. That we weren't that representative of the most impacted passengers – eg most of us didn't have younger children to worry about ~ there was a strong recognition that those who couldn't leave until X (eg dropping off their child), but needed to arrive at work by Y (being a mandatory / expected start time) were significantly impacted by some of the service gaps caused by Thameslink Express services.
3. For Harpenden, the TL Expresses that pass through around xx.13 were the more important, as they corresponded well to an xx.00 school / nursery drop off, combined with a x+1.00 start of work in Central London.
4. That the gaps in the timetable caused by TL Expresses were the bigger problem (vs lack / availability of seats).

We agreed to extend the Survey for longer and also to try and encourage as many responses as possible (see 2 above). We also noted that St Albans is the only station impacted by the 11 February consultation meeting that doesn't have a dedicated representative – its interests will currently be covered by St Albans Council, Hertfordshire County Council (both of which also cover Harpenden) and APTU (all 3 stations). Harpenden and Luton are expected to have 'dedicated' representatives. I agreed to take this up with GTR.

We also discussed the following:

1. A desire that the evening peak swapped semi-fast and all stations services – the former run to St Albans and the latter to Luton at present. This significantly extends journey times between West Hampstead Thameslink and Harpenden / Luton
 - In the morning, the semi-fast services start at Luton and the all stations at St Albans; I recollect that this was a timetabling constrain during the design stage; we will ask for this to be revisited in the light of real life experience.
2. A desire for the morning off peak fares to start just a bit earlier with the new timetable – a group particularly badly hit being lower paid workers with a 10am start – previously many could get the first off-peak service and still start at 10am. Now they can't.

- We will follow this up; be aware that this is essentially a DfT politician's decision as all fare revenue goes to them.
3. A desire for a smaller / non-existent gap on Saturday night / Sunday morning.
 - We will follow this up, with a specific emphasis on the extension of the engineering works on Sunday morning between St Pancras and Blackfriars – and more generally, but be aware that the general trend is to give Network Rail more time for engineering works, not less.
 4. The desire for more peak hour fast services to stop at West Hampstead Thameslink
 - At the busiest times in the peak, this is probably not possible due to the need to provide enough capacity; whilst we will seek changes throughout the peak, we will particularly focus on options at the edges of the peak service.
 5. The short falls in part of the weekend service even post the May reinstatements.
 - We will follow this up.
 6. The horrors of carnets
 - See the main newsletter for more on this.

None of the immediately above is for the meeting on the 11th – that will exclusively focus on May 2019 Thameslink Express calling pattern changes; it is more for the future book of work.

Our last newsletter

This is still available online – do note that it has been updated to reflect that the meeting is now in the past and the Consultation meeting is on the 11th, but is otherwise unchanged (apart from a few typos, one of them important that someone mentioned to me!). It is still available at the original URLs:

- As Adobe PDF: http://www.aptu.org.uk/memberversions/aptu-news_20190127.pdf
- As Word: http://www.aptu.org.uk/memberversions/aptu-news_20190127.doc

Regards

Neil

Neil Middleton
3 February 2019

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