

Ian Smith  
Safety & Operations Director  
Duncan Cale  
Stakeholder Manager  
Michael Webb  
Head of Train Planning and Access  
East Midlands Trains  
Derby

www.aptu.org.uk  
aptu@aptu.org.uk  
www.bedfordcommuters.org.uk  
admin@bedfordcommuters.org.uk



27 February 2018

Dear Ian, Duncan & Michael

Thank you for the time you spent with us last week; your transparency and willingness to listen was much appreciated.

Following the meeting, we thought it useful to set our priorities & concerns for change; we have limited our comments to matters within the remit of EMT as regards the current franchise; do note, however, that we found the discussions on the dilemmas and challenges facing the next franchise holder very useful.

## Timetable

### May 2018 or soon thereafter

1. The large gap in the Monday to Friday evening service from St Pancras to Wellingborough & Kettering [from 2005 to 2130) should be addressed as the highest priority. Particularly in the light of Network Rail's delays to the finalisation of the May timetable, we believe this should still be targeted for correction from 21 May. Should this not prove possible, then it needs to be targeted for resolution as soon as possible thereafter. In particular, it should not wait until the December timetable. If need be, two changes should be applied in sequence – a first additional stop / service swap, followed by a second stop / service swap.
2. The provision of a peak hour service for Wellingborough and Kettering (and stations further north) residents to / from Bedford. Pending further optimisation in December (below), we believe a realistic target is the stopping of one morning southbound service and two evening northbound services at Bedford (only). These should be timed to meet the needs of those working conventional office hours in Bedford – and thus can arrive after the main bulk of London commuters have travelled and leave before they return.
  - a. The services could be set down only in the morning and pick up only in the evening. We concur with your diagnosis that set down / pick up arrangements are less effective now with widespread information availability, but nevertheless, with proper publicity (including proper explanation of the rationale) and occasional enforcement, we believe the numbers of Bedford / London users could be kept under control. We would be prepared to go on record to state that whilst we don't like it, we support it as a 'necessary evil' to meet the needs of Kettering / Wellingborough users, who are otherwise severely disadvantaged.
  - b. If more convenient, two morning and one evening service would be equally acceptable.
  - c. Whilst we have suggested some timing targets for the Bedford stops, we recognise (and expect) that actual stop times will be determined with operational practicalities as a major influencer – eg running times, station capacity and use of Meridians in the diagram (due to faster acceleration).

- d. We would also like this change from 21 May, but if this proves impossible, believe it needs to be considered immediately thereafter, in the light of actual experience, with a target date of July.
- e. Our passenger counts (see appendix A) show that there are noticeable numbers of travellers from intermediate stations, but not so large that accommodating them is an 'impossible ask'.

#### For December 2018

3. The undertaking of the optimisation review you referred to, in time to be reflected in the December 2018 timetable. By both improving your fleet optimisation and by understanding better how Bedford station is actually used in the morning peak, we would hope this allows the return of some or all of the peak services. This optimisation should also consider how the uneven off-peak gap in EMT services for Bedford, Wellingborough and Kettering can be reduced / eliminated.
4. If '3' does not allow the return of most or all peak calls the provision of alternative services between Bedford and Wellingborough – such as a DMU shuttle, possibly bought in from another rail operator, should EMT have resourcing issues.

#### Fares

5. The provision of double back rights between Bedford and Luton Airport Parkway. We note your comments about the apparent complexities of this in terms of revenue allocation, but believe that this is the wrong approach. EMT and Thameslink should approach this on the basis that that the combination of their services & resources means the rail industry is falling significantly short on the provision of an appropriate service from the north for Bedford workers and simply accept that (1) EMT will carry passengers further than they have paid; and (2) Thameslink should accept that they will give 'free' passage – on lightly loaded contra peak services, at an effective incremental cost of near zero (eg the cost of the extra electricity) and also with negligible impact on timetable reality. Whilst it would clearly need to be formalised, this really should be seen as friends in need helping each other out without payment.
6. Support for Thameslink in providing a special arrangement for Bedford (and Luton) to allow First Class Season ticket holders with London tickets to change to Standard Class seasons, on a straight proportional refund basis, without an Administration fee.
7. Provision of straight, proportional refunds, without an Administration fee for season ticket holders travelling to Bedford from Wellingborough & further north.

#### Disruption

8. EMT to accept the principle of adding extra stops at Luton and Bedford during times of severe disruption, when Thameslink services on the Midland Mainline are severely impacted. We would not expect this to be a response to the cancellation / delay of one or two Thameslink services – it would only occur when Thameslink have very significant capacity problems (possibly caused by long delays in services).

#### Publicity

9. We believe EMT should publish a simplified explanation of the causes of your problems, particularly explaining why you have less capacity in the evening, the impact of your mixed fleet and the problems caused by having only 4 platforms at St Pancras.

## Wellingborough – Bedford bus

10. We welcome the news that this will serve the railway stations at both Wellingborough and Bedford and the journey will be direct between the two stations. The possible extension to the town centres at each end is also welcomed.

## Information requests

11. We would like to receive the following information – to be shared with our Committee members, but not for wider distribution:
  - a. The sectional running times between St Pancras, Corby, Nottingham & Sheffield for the two + six HST sets. We note your comments that they do not offer the acceleration of a Meridian & timing benefits, but nevertheless, this would be useful to us.
  - b. Provision of planned train lengths for each peak service – now and to be from May.
  - c. Provision of the full diagrams for May 2018.

## Next steps

We would welcome a further meeting to discuss the trade-offs East Midlands Trains face in trying to address these matters.

As regards the fares issue set out in 'fares' #5 & #6, we will also address this to Thameslink.

Yours sincerely

Neil Middleton  
Chairman  
APTU

Arthur Taylor  
Chairman  
BCA

Appendix

EMT Northbound PM Peak Services Passenger Count

St Pancras	Luton Airport Parkway			Luton [Town]			Bedford			Combined		Luton & Bedford		Next stop	Final destination	
	Depart	Arrive	Alight	Board	Arrive	Alight	Board	Arrive	Alight	Board	Alight	Board	Alight			Board
16:01					16:22	32	15	16:36	114	18	146	33	146	33	Wellingborough	Corby
16:29	16:49	33	41	16:52	41	16	17:07	172	26	246	83	213	42	Wellingborough	Nottingham	
17:00							07:55	217	21	217	21	217	21	Wellingborough	Corby & Sheffield	
17:15				17:39	68	12				68	12	68	12	Market Harborough	Nottingham	
17:30							18:04	319	37	319	37	319	37	Wellingborough	Nottingham	
17:45	18:07	53	23							53	23	0	0	Wellingborough	Derby	
18:00				18:22	147	20	18:36	324	11	471	31	471	31	Wellingborough	Melton Mowbray	
18:25				18:49	93	11				93	11	93	11	Market Harborough	Sheffield	
18:30	18:50	44	10				19:07	370	9	414	19	370	9	Wellingborough	Lincoln Central	
19:00				19:23	57	12	19:38	195	8	252	20	252	20	Wellingborough	Corby	

Total

130	74
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438	86
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1,711	130
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2,279	290
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2,149	216
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Thu 1 February 2018

2 counters per train

(c) Association of Public Transport Users

Thu 11 January 2018

3 counters per train

(c) Bedford Commuters Association

Data may be shared and republished etc provides source is acknowledged