

South Western Railway  
Timetable feedback

**please reply to:**  
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For the attention of Jon Hills

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18<sup>th</sup> December 2017

Dear Jon,

### **SWR December 2018 Timetable Consultation Response**

Please find attached the Railfuture response to the invitation to review your proposed timetable changes from December 2018. Our response represents the collective views of all our branches that are affected by your planned changes as well as other organisations and individuals that have contacted us.

Many of our respondents have raised issues that can only be resolved by working with Network Rail and the DfT, mainly to deal with capacity issues. We have ignored these and so our response effectively only covers the short term. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss medium and long- term issues with your company, perhaps through the stakeholder contacts.

Yours sincerely

**David Brace**

Mr David Brace  
Railfuture  
Wessex Branch

## Detailed responses to Planned Timetable Changes

### Clapham Junction

In the present timetable we understood that during the morning high peak no trains can call on the up fast between 07.30 and 09.00. We would resist any plans to extend this period further into the shoulder peak.

### Woking

*QUESTION: Woking stop in Exeter service We propose, following the pre-consultation meetings, to stop the Waterloo to Exeter services at Woking. However, instead a Clapham Junction stop could be provided, or even that the service could call alternately every two hours at Woking and every two hours at Clapham Junction. From the three options, which do you think provides the best interchange opportunities for passengers travelling from the suburban area to Yeovil and Exeter?*

We assume that this applies to both up and down services. Our first choice would be to retain stops off-peak at both Woking and Clapham Junction as this would provide the best range of connections. Many passengers on all main line services to and from London would choose Clapham Junction over Woking as the latter gives a much wider selection of destinations/origins with one simple change. Our second choice is therefore Clapham Junction. If that is not possible then alternate Woking and Clapham Junction stops is our final choice.

### Table 149 London, Windsor and Reading

*QUESTION: Queenstown Road connectivity. Do you agree with the reduction in calls at Queenstown Road, resulting in a reduction in the number of direct journey opportunities to and from this station? If not, what other suburban services should call there?*

We agree with the reduction (off-peak) to perhaps a 10-minute interval service for Queenstown Road.

*QUESTION: Connectivity. On Sundays, do you support an all-day service every half hour from Hounslow to Waterloo via Twickenham, if this breaks connectivity between Hounslow/Brentford and Feltham/Staines? If not, then how would you improve this connectivity without an overall increase of trains on the Windsor Lines and without adversely affecting other connectivity between other stations?*

We suggest that some Windsor services could be diverted via Hounslow, thereby providing a service to link Hounslow/Brentford and Feltham/Staines.

### General

Overall, we approve of the enhanced frequency and increased capacity of services planned in Table 149, particularly on the Reading and Windsor routes.

We also approve of the retention or improvement of the timings for first and last trains on most routes.

We approve of the better Sunday services on most of these routes.

We are concerned that the present Waterloo to Weybridge service via Virginia Water is to be curtailed to run only from Virginia Water, at least in school hours. Many students travel from and to local stations beyond Virginia Water to two large schools in Chertsey.

The loss of connectivity from Hounslow westwards is going to make journeys for many students needing Egham to attend Strodes College, Holloway College and University of London. Please consider making the Waterloo to Windsor via Hounslow service a 10-car service which splits at Staines. Alternatively consider extending the Virginia to Weybridge service back to Staines.

You should consider having more stops at Longcross inserted on Reading trains. Longcross is currently being developed as a garden village with new houses already being built.

## **Table 150 Ascot to Guildford – Aldershot – Ascot with connections**

### General

The splitting of services so that Farnham receives a direct service to Guildford is welcomed

Whilst connection times are acceptable during peak hours for fit passengers, disabled passengers will need to travel northwards to Ascot where connection times are less good as Ash Vale has no level access.

You should press Network Rail to give this latter station priority for making level access.

At Ash, the current connection times are too tight to transfer from GWR Reading – Guildford services to SWR Guildford – Aldershot – Farnham services. If these tight connections remain in the new timetable, they should be eased so that jumping over lowered barriers is eliminated.

## **Table 152 Waterloo to Dorking, Guildford and Kingston etc**

### General

We approve of the retention or improvement of the timings for first and last trains on most routes.

We note that capacity will be improved as new stock is introduced and 10 car trains will generally be used.

Some detailed changes are proposed, and we approve of these.

It is good to see that Saturday services will generally match weekday off-peak services to cater for leisure traffic.

## **Table 155 Waterloo to Woking, Guildford, Alton and Basingstoke**

*QUESTION: Hook and Winchfield AM peak calls We have provided a peak period train service that is in line with our agreed train service levels, however this results in Hook and Winchfield having a half hourly service with no AM peak-period additions while Farnborough and Fleet will have six trains per hour. Two of these six trains are slower than the other services from Fleet and Farnborough and are unlikely to be as attractive to commuters from there as they can travel later and arrive in Waterloo at a similar time. Do you agree that the peak train service we are providing at these stations is the right one or should we consider some adjustment of calls on the slower services?*

We consider a worsening level of service in peak hours is unacceptable. We therefore support the revised draft timetable issued after pressure from local users. However, one omission still remains. The 08.06 from Basingstoke (currently 08.05) provides a vital college and school service, particularly from Hook and Winchfield, to Farnborough. All three stops should be reinstated otherwise this will require earlier starts for such students (20 min)

### General

On the half-hourly stopping services both from Basingstoke and Alton to Waterloo off-peak we would like to see alternate trains retain their Clapham Junction stop as at present.

The loss of the last pre-morning peak stop and the loss of a pick-up at Clapham Junction for the first down train after the evening peak (currently 19.19) are also to be regretted as these reduce connectivity in the morning and will lengthen the journey home to Hook and Winchfield. We would like to see these calls reinstated.

The down hourly semi-fast services from Waterloo to Southampton Central and Portsmouth Harbour in the off-peak are shown to arrive in Basingstoke (we assume platform 2) at xx.29 and xx.59 respectively, in each case one minute after the arrival of the stopping service from Waterloo (we assume platform 1). We further assume that the two trains will follow each other along the slow line as far as the approaches to Basingstoke, as both stop at Fleet, meaning that any delay to the stopping service will cause a knock-on delay to the semi-fast service. The combination also means that every stopping service fails to connect with the corresponding semi-fast service leading to a 30-minute wait unless another operator's service is available. By separating the two trains by an additional three minutes, the performance risk could be significantly reduced and advertised connections improved at Basingstoke. This could be achieved by running the stopper three minutes earlier (i.e. in its existing timings), running the semi fast services 3 minutes later (as per the current semi-fast Southampton service) or a combination of the two.

*QUESTION: Worplesdon Sunday Services We are providing Worplesdon with its first Sunday service for some years. Currently this is planned to start from around 1230 when the enhanced Sunday Portsmouth Line service commences. Do you support the introduction of Sunday services at Worplesdon? Do you feel that it needs Sunday morning trains if these could be provided?*

We support the provision of Sunday services for Worplesdon and believe that a Sunday morning service would also be beneficial. There are planning proposals for 600 homes which, when built, will result in more passengers. Worplesdon is between Woking and Guildford both of which have leisure facilities and this station provides convenient access at weekends.

## **Table 156 Waterloo – Guildford – Haslemere – Portsmouth**

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## General

The proposed improvements are welcome.

We question the need for including Godalming in the ½ hourly off-peak fast services. Skip stopping would be better for additionally serving Milford, Witley, Liphook and Liss.

We question the need for the second stopping service every hour to serve Portsmouth and suggest you should consider sending it via Fareham to Eastleigh, then Southampton, thereby giving better services for intermediate stations between Fareham and Eastleigh.

You should consider including Sunday services for Hilsea. This is a suburb of Portsmouth and a Sunday service would provide convenient access to retail outlets, visitor sites and the Isle of Wight.

### **Table 158 Waterloo – Basingstoke – Southampton – Bournemouth - Weymouth**

*QUESTION: South Dorset and Hampshire Local Services Stakeholders have asked for faster journeys and improved service intervals. We plan that journeys from Weymouth to London will be up to 12 minutes faster and for the two trains per hour between Weymouth and Bournemouth to be spaced much nearer to a half-hourly frequency, Wool will see both Weymouth trains calling there. This however requires the link from some less busy stations to London to be broken at off-peak times with the trains instead providing cross Southampton connectivity to Fareham and Portsmouth. Same platform connections will be provided at Brockenhurst for passengers using the local service to connect to/from London. Do you support the speeding up of services from Weymouth with improved service intervals between Weymouth and Bournemouth and the change in connectivity for smaller stations?*

We support the need to speed up services between Bournemouth and Weymouth but not at the expense of the current second train to Waterloo. The proposed hourly fast off-peak service from Weymouth to Southampton with a same platform change into the GWR Cardiff to Portsmouth (limited stops east of Southampton) would provide a faster service overall compared with your proposal. It is much more important generally to provide capacity (particularly in peak-periods), frequency and connectivity rather than headline speeding up of services. Connections to Southampton Airport from Dorset are more important than to Gatwick and Heathrow.

Alternatively, the slow hourly Poole to Waterloo service could be diverted from Southampton to Portsmouth, giving passengers beyond Poole an opportunity to switch to the Portsmouth service at Bournemouth or Brockenhurst. More importantly, the current down stopping service from Waterloo to Poole has extended stops at both Southampton and Brockenhurst and would be better used if it started from Portsmouth.

Parkstone and Branksome, increasingly important commuting stations as parking at Bournemouth is much more expensive, have slower peak-hour services in both directions than at present.

For travellers from stations between Weymouth and Poole requiring an ongoing train to many destinations from Clapham Junction, this will now require two changes with resulting lengthening of journey time.

#### General

We support local groups, such as those at Shawford, west Dorset and Dorchester South stations, where they see a general worsening of services rather than a retention of existing services or an improvement.

The connection of the hourly fast service at Woking with the Rail-Air link will worsen substantially as the link departs at typically xx.35 and the train arrives at xx.46.

We welcome the planned improvement to services at Wool.

### **Table 158A Salisbury, Romsey and Chandlers Ford to Southampton**

#### General

Services seem un-changed but we understand that connectivity has worsened at interchanges such as Eastleigh. An additional platform at Eastleigh and a bay platform at Southampton would be useful in the medium term.

We do support the possible integration of this service with the Trans-Wilts Swindon - Melksham – Salisbury service, thus allowing more journey opportunities and destinations.

### **Table 159 Lymington to Brockenhurst**



General

We are pleased to see a regular interval service with both earlier first and later last trains serving the branch.

We believe you should ease the connection times at Brockenhurst for those passengers continuing eastwards to Southampton and London. Whilst 2 minutes for a cross-platform change into west-bound services to Bournemouth is acceptable, 3 minutes to reach the up platform, via a footbridge remote from the branch train, is clearly not. We have assumed that all connections are advertised and subject to delay/repay rules.

**Table 160 London – Salisbury, Yeovil Junction and Exeter**

*QUESTION: Saturday seasonal service Waterloo – Yeovil – Weymouth. Do you feel that the seasonal through service that operates between Waterloo, Yeovil Pen Mill and Weymouth, via Maiden Newton, should continue?*

We believe that there is suppressed demand for passengers west of Basingstoke to have an alternative route to the seaside at Weymouth without having to travel via Winchester and/or Southampton. Passengers between Waterloo and Basingstoke will take the direct route, however crowded.

We have been made aware that the existing services sometimes run so late west of Salisbury that many potential passengers give up and do not travel. This existing service must be made more reliable.

*QUESTION: Weekend Service to Bristol/Yeovil Pen Mill. At weekends, our proposal is to continue the current level of train service on these routes. We are considering an early lunchtime service between Bristol and Waterloo on Sundays with corresponding Salisbury to Bristol additional service. Do you consider that this additional service is best timed to improve journey opportunities on this route? If not, then when would you want this extra service to run?*

Whilst the additional service would be welcome, it would serve a different market (students and others returning to college or from weekend breaks to home respectively) to those making leisure trips.

There are only a limited number of daily services from Salisbury to Bristol, separating off the Exeter services at Salisbury. We want to see



more services to satisfy the leisure market by running earlier trains from London and trains back to London later in the day, all on a daily basis.

### General

We approve of the additional off-peak services from Yeovil Junction and the plans to run later in the evening from Waterloo. Can the 22.25 from Waterloo not be extended from Gillingham to Yeovil Junction on Mon - Thurs and not just on Fridays? This would provide a valuable extra hour for those spending the evening in London.

We question the timings of the Salisbury and Exeter trains between Waterloo and Woking in both directions as these are typically several minutes faster than at present. Failure to keep to these times will result in knock-on effects for other services.

In the morning peak period Crewkerne has no trains westward to Exeter between 07.15 and 08.50. To fill this gap can you not insert a stop on the 07.18 from Yeovil Junction at about 07.30?

We question the removal of an evening peak hour stop at Overton from the 16.25 service from Waterloo. This would provide local commuters from Basingstoke with a convenient train and cut the 55-minute wait that would otherwise occur. We note the change to run one up service from Exeter to Waterloo not stopping after Andover. We understand that this train is well loaded, at least from Yeovil Junction eastwards but question the resulting loss of connectivity at Basingstoke, Woking or Clapham Junction as insufficient reason.

The consultation states that "Train service formations west of Salisbury have been increased to target known overcrowding". This will be monitored to ensure no service suffers a reduction in capacity.

We believe that the 17.46 from Exeter and terminating at Axminster runs as empty coaching stock to Yeovil Junction and Salisbury. We would like to see this being made into a service train thus providing an additional peak hour service for residents of Crewkerne and Yeovil Junction.

We would like to see Whimple station having a stop inserted for the 17.26 from Exeter St Davids to provide a peak hour train for local commuters.

**Table 165 Portsmouth and Fareham to Southampton and Weymouth**General

We have suggested alternatives for this busy route, already served by 3 different companies, at least between Portsmouth and Southampton.

We understand some clashes between your planned services and other operators are being resolved in order to comply with the Rules of the Plan. We will monitor this to ensure that no operator is affected

We have expressed our concerns and suggested alternatives in our notes for tables 156 and 158.

In addition, if this diversion of the one of the Weymouth services from London to Portsmouth is adopted, you should consider removing stops from Portchester and Swanwick and adding in Woolston and Netley as the first two are already served by SWR and GTR trains. You should also see if these services could be extended to Portsmouth Harbour to serve leisure traffic for Gunwharf Quays, Portsmouth Historic Dockyard and the Isle of Wight catamaran services.