

RAILFUTURE CORRESPONDENCE – EAST-COAST “EUREKA” TIMETABLE

Railfuture East Anglia branch responded to the consultation on the Eureka timetable and campaigned for improvements to the train connections from East Anglia at Peterborough.

This document from the www.railfuture.org.uk/east.html web-site contains some of the correspondence between *Railfuture* East Anglia and the rail industry.

Item 1

Ms Elaine Holt,
The Chairman,
East Coast Railway,
York.

Dear Ms Holt,

With reference to the ECML timetable re-write, we are pleased that the concept of an 'even interval' timetable is being explored in order to provide a more rational public timetable and to provide more paths. However we are concerned with some of the draft proposals, as published by NR in October. I attach our critique of the proposal as it stands to show you our concerns.

We understand and applaud the need for a speed up of the service but as you see in the critique, do not want that at the expense of a huge swathe of the United Kingdom, namely East Anglia !

We have of course written to your PR team with same critique but so far without response/acknowledgement. I wonder if you could let me have the email address of those concerned with the timetable at the DfT, NR.

When we recently had meetings with Cambridgeshire County Council, Norfolk County Council, they were unaware of the timetable changes proposed and clearly have not been included in the discussions/briefings. I really do hope East Coast will be vigorous in supporting the needs of East Anglia and Peterborough in this matter.

May I at this juncture welcome you as 'the leader' of this important railway. We were sorry to see you go from FCC so we most pleased when the announcement re East Coast when it was made.

(I hope East Coast will engage more positively with groups such as ours as in the past NXEC was most difficult to deal with and quite frankly we just gave up. This was in great contrast to FCC and NXEA.)

I would appreciate an acknowledgement to this email and its attachment.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Wakefield,
Chairman, Railfuture East Anglia,
7, Hollymount,
Cambridge,
CB1 1QD
tel:01223 352364

cc Nick Dibben, branch secretary.

Item 2

From: Elaine Holt <Elaine.Holt@dor.gsi.gov.uk>
To: peter wakefield <pter.wakefield@railfuture.org.uk>
Cc: Nicholas Dibben <nick.dibben@railfuture.org.uk>
Sent: Wed, 9 December, 2009 11:45:18
Subject: RE: ECML timetable revision December 2010(Railfuture East Anglia)

Dear Peter

Thank you for your email and the attachment. Clearly you have given much thought to an analysis of the proposed timetable in respect of Peterborough and this is very helpful as a starting point for discussion.

Your assessment of the overall purpose of the timetable rewrite is spot on. So I will move straight away to addressing your concerns.

Peterborough to London and vice versa

Obviously our aim is to achieve a standard, repeating cycle every hour. As you can see, we have largely achieved this but not quite. We will endeavour to improve on this whenever possible, but I think you are aware of the constraints we face which can lead to oddities in the timings.

We consider that a service of three trains per hour at set times represents a much more attractive service offer than the existing timetable which gives between two and four at irregular times. Obviously three at precise twenty minute intervals would be ideal but I don't think we are likely to quite get to that. We think three fast trains per hour is as good as is on offer to any comparable destination in the UK – and of course it is impossible to improve on this within a “five trains per hour” overall envelope without destroying the twin objective of improving journey time between the busiest pairs of stations.

I should add that the 0610 southbound service was not shown on this version of the timetable in error. It is our intention to continue running this service.

Peterborough to/from the North and connections to/from East and South

We are aiming for a two hourly frequency direct service to and from Edinburgh by means of extending alternate terminating services beyond Newcastle . This is achieved in this version of the timetable for all but one two hour period, and we are still trying to see if this gap can be closed. We believe that this level of service is appropriate for the market relative to the other flows. Clearly the current timetable has irregular stopping patterns and is sub-optimal in this regard. The fact that there happens to be 12 such services today (instead of the seven which we hope to achieve) does not imply that these are solely there for the purpose of connecting Peterborough and Edinburgh!

I think you would agree with me that wherever we place the Peterborough calls around the clockface there are always going to be some good and some bad connections to and from the East and South of Peterborough. I think you are right to identify Cambridge as the key connectional flow, and we hope that the service between Peterborough and Cambridge will increase in frequency as a consequence of proposals being developed by our colleagues at Cross Country. In reality we are

severely constrained as to when the calls happen at Peterborough by the need to slot in to key long distance trains at other points along the route, and a whole variety of other restrictions.

The last point I would make regarding the connectional opportunities at Peterborough is this: whilst we will do the best we can to maximise and optimise these, the reality is that the size of the total flows involved is very small compared to the much more significant flows to and from the main destinations. All timetables are compromises between conflicting objectives, and this one is no different in that regard from all the others! Darlington to London is in fact one of the top East Coast flows, and easily justifies the level of service we are proposing, despite the time penalty involved in calling there.

Next steps

We are hoping to have our proposed timetable much more fully developed by mid January next year, and will be carrying out a comprehensive consultation exercise with stakeholders along the route then, and with our customers directly. We will welcome all feedback on the proposals as they are at that stage, and I look forward to further discussions with you then. We will endeavour to make appropriate changes to the timetable after that point, so long as they are practicable within the constraints we have to work within.

Yours sincerely

Elaine Holt

Chief Executive Officer
Directly Operated Railways Ltd



Chairman
East Coast Main Line Company Limited



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Item 3

Dear Elaine,

It is some time since we have heard anything about the progress with the new timetable.

As a result we are still concerned about the connections at Peterborough, as it is by no means clear whether the proposed additional services to Cambridge will materialise and, of course, the damage the originally proposed connectional times to/from the Norwich service will do to the business traffic from the Norwich insurance industry and UAE students.

You may remember that concerns were raised about the loss of Stevenage railhead traffic to nearby Luton and Stansted airports, which especially seem to be counter to government concerns about cutting back short haul airline traffic.

Could you let us have an update on current progress/ thoughts, please?

Has a detailed count of users on/off 'north of Peterborough' services been conducted?

Best wishes,

Peter.

Item 4

Peter

As you know in the current timetable there are 11 direct services from Peterborough to Edinburgh and in the Eureka! timetable there are 8. Eureka! does give Peterborough an hourly service to Newcastle so it is only Peterborough - Scotland passengers who are affected by the slight reduction in the number of services. In the hours when there is not a through train to Scotland a 14 minute connection on the same platform is available at Darlington.

Without compromising journey time to Scotland we have put a Peterborough call into the 07:00 Kings Cross - Edinburgh. However considering further calls, especially southbound is complex due to the number of other services that are affected.

Network Rail's focus at the moment is on the weekend timetable they do have limited resources. Our plan is to re-examine what further improvements we can make to Peterborough - Edinburgh after August, when this becomes Network Rail's day job, but only if we can maintain the 4h20 journey time, otherwise we would seriously disadvantage passengers from the North East who are connecting into services to Glasgow, Fife and Aberdeen. We think there may be a possibility of a further two trains a day (09:00 and 13:00 from King's Cross and 15:00 and 17:00 from Edinburgh) but at this stage we cannot confirm.

I appreciate this is not the speed at which you probably want an answer – indeed the process is slower than perhaps all of us would wish – however this is the current situation. It is all a very delicate balance and we are trying to find a way through the new timetable that meets the needs of the people who use the service. I hope you are finding East Coast is being more forthcoming these days?

Regards

Elaine Holt - Chairman

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Item 5

From: peter wakefield [mailto:peter.wakefield@railfuture.org.uk]
Sent: 31 March 2011 10:02
To: Elaine Holt
Subject: Re: Mon, 24 May, 2010 12:21:13Re: ECML timetable revision December 2010(Railfuture East Anglia)

Dear Elaine,

Many thanks for the two pieces of correspondence below this note.

We would like to put a piece on our Railfuture East Anglia Branch website about the new EC timetable which would include copies of our correspondence... however I feel that we should have your permission to include your two letters either in full form or even with some kind of redaction. Perhaps you would be kind enough to glance over what you wrote a few months ago.

I should add that while recognising the problems of timetabling on a mixed traffic route such as the ECML, we remain disappointed with the connections at Peterborough off Norwich services in particular. We hope that you will keep this under review.

Yours sincerely,
Peter Wakefield,
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Railfuture websites:
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www.railfuturescotland.org.uk
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Item 6

From: Elaine Holt [mailto:elaine.holt@directlyoperatedrailways.co.uk]
Sent: 31 March 2011 12:04
To: peter wakefield [mailto:peter.wakefield@railfuture.org.uk]

Cc: Fisher, Shaun; Smith, Neal

Subject: RE: Mon, 24 May, 2010 12:21:13Re: ECML timetable revision December 2010(Railfuture East Anglia)

Peter

More than happy to help out on this – however I just want to make sure that things haven't moved on since these notes.

Shaun

Can you agree with Peter something useful for Railfuture to use and get the latest details.

Elaine Holt - Chairman

Directly Operated Railways Ltd
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Item 7

From: "Fisher, Shaun" <Shaun.Fisher@eastcoast.co.uk>

To: "Holt, Elaine" <elaine.holt@directlyoperatedrailways.co.uk>; peter wakefield <peter.wakefield@railfuture.org.uk>

Cc: "Smith, Neal" <Neal.Smith@eastcoast.co.uk>

Sent: Fri, 1 April, 2011 7:39:47

Subject: RE: Mon, 24 May, 2010 12:21:13Re: ECML timetable revision December 2010(Railfuture East Anglia)

No problem at all, will do.

Peter – is later on today ok ? (I'm a bit swamped with meetings at present).

Thanks

Shaun

Shaun Fisher
Head of Operational Planning
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Item 8

From: peter wakefield [mailto:peter.wakefield@railfuture.org.uk]
Sent: 01 April 2011 10:04
To: Fisher, Shaun
Subject: Re: Mon, 24 May, 2010 12:21:13 Re: ECML timetable revision December 2010(Railfuture East Anglia)

Shaun,

Many thanks.. and whenever you have a moment.

Best wishes,
Peter

Item 8

From: "Fisher, Shaun" <Shaun.Fisher@eastcoast.co.uk>
To: peter wakefield <peter.wakefield@railfuture.org.uk>
RE: Mon, 24 May, 2010 12:21:13 Re: ECML timetable revision December 2010(Railfuture East Anglia)

Peter

Apologies for the delay – Friday didn't quite go to plan and nor did yesterday !

In terms of things that have changed since Elaine's previous comments :

- We eventually managed to achieve additional Peterborough stops in the "fast Anglo-Scot" services which depart King's Cross at 09:00 and 13:00 (as well as the 07:00 previously mentioned)
- In the Southbound direction, what was mentioned as a 15:00 from Edinburgh actually became a 16:25 from Newcastle (and it does stop at Peterborough). The 17:00, 17:30 and 18:30 departures from Edinburgh will all call at Peterborough

In total, on Weekdays there are 9 direct services per day in each direction between Peterborough and Edinburgh, with a 10th Northbound service operating through to Edinburgh on Fridays Only (the 19:30 from King's Cross).

On Saturdays, there are 11 direct Northbound services and 13 direct Southbound services – this is an hourly service from start of day until 17:30.

On Sundays, it is 9 direct Northbound and 13 direct Southbound – or again, an hourly service from start of day until 18:30 (plus an additional departure at 19:00 from Edinburgh).

Is there any further info at all I can help you with ? If so, please let me know and I should be able to reply by the end of the day.

Hope that is ok.

Thanks
Shaun