

To: (District) Joint Transportation Board

By: Mike Gibson, Public Affairs Manager, Southeastern Railway

Date:

Subject: Southeastern Railway Stakeholder Newsletter

Classification: Information only

Summary: This paper identifies the current works and programmes about which Southeastern Railway intends to notify the public. It has been suggested that this information would be helpful to advise Members of the Joint Transportation Boards.

Introduction

1. Since the last newsletter there have been a number of interesting developments. On rail franchising we were looking forward to the pre-qualification stage. However, Government's decision to postpone the award of the West Coast Main Line franchise to First Group pending the outcome of a review into the franchising process has put the Southeastern and other franchise competitions on hold. On fares, Prime Minister David Cameron has announced that Government will be capping next year's regulated fare increase at RPI + 1% and written confirmation has been received from the Department for Transport. As the RPI for July (the month when fare increases are set) was 3.2%, this means that the average increase on Southeastern services from January 2013 will be 4.2%. The fares team is currently working on the rate of increase from individual stations and they'll be posted on our website within the next few weeks.
2. Appendix 1 - Newsletter

Conclusion

2. To note the content of the attached report.

Contact Officer – Mike Gibson, Public Affairs Manager, Southeastern Railway

Appendix 1



Welcome

Hello and welcome to our Autumn newsletter.

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If you have any comments, or there is anything else you would like to see in the newsletter, please let me, Mike Gibson, know at

<mailto:mike.gibson@southeasternrailway.co.uk?subject=Southeastern%20Stakeholder%20Newsletter%20-%20Autumn%202012>

Mike Gibson

Public Affairs Manager

[Thameslink, London Bridge re-build](#)
[Christmas and New Year engineering work](#)
[Stakeholder Forum](#)
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Thameslink, London Bridge re-build

From December work begins to re-build London Bridge station as part of the Thameslink programme. This will be an enormous civil engineering project as the station will be totally re-built. When fully complete in 2018, London Bridge will have the biggest concourse in the UK. Lifts and escalators will take passengers to every platform, whilst new entrances on Tooley Street and St Thomas Street will mean better access to local cycling, walking and bus routes. Congestion on the Northern line at London Bridge Underground station will be reduced and train services between 8am and 9am will increase from 70 to a maximum of 88.

The works will initially impact on the Southern side of the station, but as the building work goes ahead there will be an impact on services to and from London Bridge, Cannon Street and Charing Cross.

To keep you informed we and Network Rail will be holding a series of road shows at London terminals and stations most affected.

These sessions will be advertised through leaflets and posters at stations and if you want to find out more about the project, do come along. From 29 October, the Thameslink website will be re-launched to give more details of the work so re-visit the site at <http://southeasterncreatesend1.com/t/r-l-kdkdiki-eukliiydh-i/>

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Christmas and New Year engineering work

As part of both the Thameslink programme and Network Rail's maintenance programme there will be changes to services over the Christmas and New Year, so if travelling over the Christmas and New Year period, please check with us on 0845 000 2222 or <http://southeasterncreatesend1.com/t/r-l-kdkdiki-eukliiydh-d/> or with National Rail Enquiries 08457 48 49 50 <http://southeasterncreatesend1.com/t/r-l-kdkdiki-eukliiydh-h/> before you leave home. We apologise in advance for any inconvenience caused, but, you'll appreciate that these are essential works.

However, we're pleased to say for the first time a high speed service will operate between Ashford International at St. Pancras on Boxing Day. This is trial conducted by Southeastern, HS1 and the Department for Transport and this service is outside the usual revenue support system to make it possible.

A summary of the service specification is below and full details of the changes are [available to download here](#).

Details will be on our website shortly and posters will be stations well in advance.

Stakeholder Forum

Around 60 delegates representing local authorities, rail user groups and amenity societies across our franchise area attended our last stakeholder forum on 10 October at the Priestfield Conference centre. The forum, chaired by Linda McCord from Passenger Focus heard a presentation from MD Charles Horton and Service Delivery Director Vince Lucas on current developments including train performance, the Olympic legacy, autumn and winter preparations, fares and the current position on rail franchising. If you would like a copy of the presentation, please let me know.

As always, the main part of the forum was devoted to questions from the floor.

Chris Fribbins from Rail Future asked, given that station and train maintenance had been brought forward in advance of the games, whether there was now a backlog that needed to be cleared? He also questioned whether all high speed season ticket holders had received compensation for the reduction in scheduled services during the games?

Vince Lucas (VL) said that there would be a period of "catching up" in respect of train and station maintenance but this was under control. He also advised any high speed customer who had not been compensated to contact Southeastern Customer Relations.

Linda McCord advised that Passenger Focus was currently pursuing appeals from several customers on the level of compensation offered to high speed season ticket holders during the Games. However, CH explained that Southeastern was the only train operator to offer compensation to season ticket holders whose services were affected by the Games.

On fares, Stephen Gasche from Kent County Council sought assurances that Southeastern would not use the 5% "flex" when setting fares for 2013.

Charles Horton (CH) advised that Southeastern were aware of, and would listen to, stakeholder representations on this issue.

David Gardner from the Charlton Rail User Group questioned the focus on Kent services and investment at the expense of Metro stations and services. He also queried the delay in bringing the lift into service at Charlton station, as he understood that station staff needed additional training. CH replied that Southeastern held two stakeholder forums a year, one in London one in Kent and hoped that equal emphasis was given to both. It was only natural that the content of the presentation would reflect whether the audience was primarily Metro or Kent stakeholders.

The lift at Charlton should be working, staff had been briefed and he asked the user group to report any future problems to Southeastern.

Sue Groves from the Southeastern Stakeholder Advisory Board complained that the reduction in drop off spaces at Gillingham station made life more difficult for disabled passengers. VL replied that this should be a priority and was being addressed with Medway Council.

Roger Johnson from the Sevenoaks Rail Travellers Association queried the taxi queuing system at Sevenoaks station and in particular, the lack of cover for passengers waiting in inclement weather. VL said this was something that needed to be addressed by the local authority given space constraints and that any extension of the queuing area would encroach on the public highway.

Joshua Coupe from the Kent Youth Council asked why the timetable on the Medway Valley line had been amended. VL said this was primarily the result of the introduction of the high speed service from Strood.

Ian Killbery from Trains for Deal asked that Southeastern give priority for cyclists and suggested that wheel channels on stairs to platforms would be welcomed. CH said that as a cyclist himself, he backed measures to improve facilities and highlighted the additional racks installed since Southeastern took over the franchise and the forthcoming Brompton cycle hire scheme.

Councillor Vince Maple from Medway council congratulated Southeastern on its performance during the Olympics. On fares, he said the current regime was complex did not accord with current working patterns and did not offer enough flexibility.

CH said he had sympathy with this argument and later next year Southeastern was hopeful that it would be able to trial a smart card system on high speed connected stations. This would give more flexibility to passengers particularly those whose working patterns did not accord with traditional Monday to Friday nine to five working day.

John Grubb from the North Kent Rail Users Group complained that connection times at Strood were

sometimes inconvenient, could they be improved? VL advised that while this was a valid point, Southeastern did not have sufficient rolling stock to make any significant adjustments. His point about connections was mirrored by Ian Kilberry who said that connections at Ramsgate could also be improved. VL sympathised but said there was no easy way around this and realistically, that the only way to amend the connection times was to remove stops at intermediate stations, which would not be popular with those so affected.

Chris Fribbins remarked that some connection times on Journey Planner were unrealistic. CH asked Chris to send in details and we would look to amending them.

Passenger information was also raised by a number of delegates and Anthony Perrett from Chilham Parish Council highlighted problems at St. Pancras station where there was a need for information on connecting services at Ashford International.

Councillor Buffy Maisey from Cuxton Parish Council asked for an update on refurbishment works at Cuxton station. CH advised this was a matter for Network Rail and he would ask them to contact her direct.

Kathy Pratt from Tonbridge Line Commuters reported that some local rail users had complained of incorrect tickets being sold at Paddock Wood with customers being given the higher priced "via HS1" ticket instead of the main line only option they needed. CH apologised and said this would be taken up with the station manager. If passengers who felt they had been sold the wrong ticket could contact Southeastern with the details, we would investigate and give a full refund.

On ticket sales, Geoff Brown from the Edenbridge Rail Travellers Association suggested that ticket vending machines operated by Southern at his local station offered a much wider range of tickets than those at Southeastern stations. CH said he thought that Southeastern offered a greater range but asked Geoff to send details.

Joshua Coupe questioned the Southeastern 'phone app, which he felt was not as good as the London Midland app. VL said this was surprising as both used data supplied by National Rail Enquiries.

Jackie Davidson from the North Kent Rail User Group questioned the level of subsidy given by Government to Southeastern and how much had been allocated to the high speed service? VL said that the subsidy could not be broken down in this way but details of Government subsidy could be found in the annual report of accounts of Go Ahead, Southeastern's owning group.

David Kelso from the Railway Correspondence and Travel Society complimented Southeastern both on performance during the Games and in particular how we and Network Rail had successfully managed a points failure at Cannon Street during the Games.

However, he said it was understandable that once the "high" of the Olympics was over it may be difficult for Southeastern to maintain staff morale and the past level of performance. CH said that part of the Olympic legacy was to maintain the "feel good" factor that existed during the Olympics and Paralympics. This was never going to be easy, but the excellent train performance and customer praise achieved over the Games period had demonstrated what Southeastern staff were capable of and management teams were making every effort to sustain this.

Charles Horton closed the meeting with thanks to Linda McCord for chairing the Question and Answer session. Finally delegates were advised that this would be Vince Lucas' last forum as he was would be leaving Southeastern to pursue new opportunities next year. He thanked Vince for his hard work over the years and his contribution to the significant improvements in performance and customer satisfaction since taking over the franchise in 2006.

Is my train on time?

As outlined in our last newsletter, the format for publishing these figures has changed. Back in July last year following representations from passengers we moved from the Passenger Charter compensation system, which offered discounts to season ticket holders on renewal if performance and reliability targets were not met, to "delay-repay" which offers compensation to all passengers regardless of the type of ticket held if their journey was delayed by 30 minutes or more. Accordingly the Department for Transport has advised that we no longer need to publish reliability and performance figures as all passengers are now compensated in the event of delays of 30

minutes plus and from July 2012 we need to publish Public Performance Measure (PPM) figures only (the percentage of passenger service trains we operate on time against our planned timetable) 'On time' is measured as trains arriving within five minutes of their planned destination arrival time. We'll publish our PPM on our website every four weeks and the latest figures are below. Again, we're pleased to say it's a very encouraging figure, with average performance up from 91.7% in the last period.

We are now entering the traditionally challenging autumn and winter months, but in partnership with network rail we'll be doing our best to maintain and improve on this performance which is the best on the Southeastern network since records began.

Performance on average this period	95.5%
Performance on average over the last year	91.9%