

Board Meeting TOC Paper

Jul 10 BM 12.3

Contains restricted or confidential information?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>
	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>



If confidential, protective marking ¹	
Date of Meeting	14 July 2010
Agenda Item	12.3
Report Title	SouthEastern
Sponsor	Ashwin Kumar
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1. Passenger Focus objectives	Reasons for Objectives
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<p>1. Continue to ensure SER's Major December 2009 timetable change meets passengers' needs to the maximum extent possible.</p>	<p>To ensure Passenger Focus is at the forefront to monitor and review the impact of the major timetable changes on passengers and to work with SER and the DfT on any changes identified or required.</p>
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The Integrated Kent franchise is up and running with the introduction of the High speed services in December 2009. 29 new 'Javelin trains' provide high speed services between Ashford, Ebbsfleet, Stratford and St Pancras as well as from the Kent Coast. The new timetable also provided enhanced service capacity and service frequency on the West Kent route.

There is strong opposition to the new timetable changes as follows –

- Passengers on the Kent Coast via Chatham – who have seen their existing 'classic services' to Cannon Street replaced by high speed services to St Pancras resulting in a loss of frequency, increased journey times and poor performance.
- Passengers from Maidstone East have lost peak Cannon Street services.
- Trains for Deal – are campaigning for the high speed services

We criticised Southeastern for their handling of the winter disruption and refusal to offer compensation to passengers. Complaints soared during this period and at one point, Southeastern were working to a 4 week backlog.

<p>2. Influence and contribute to the development of the Kent Route Utilisation Strategy to meet the growth forecast and passenger priorities</p>	<p>The options agreed as part of the final RUS are critical to future funding and delivery of much needed solutions to address medium to long term capacity constraints faced by passengers today and in the near future.</p>
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¹ ie RESTRICTED plus COMMERCIAL / POLICY / STAFF / PERSONAL PROTECT

<p>3. Improve passenger satisfaction with 'how well SER deals with delays'</p>	<p>The latest scores show a high level of dissatisfaction with this factor and it is nearly bottom of all TOCs.</p>

2. Progress report

- *December 2009 time table changes -*

We reviewed the timetable changes with Southeastern in March 2010 with regards service patterns, performance and capacity and the complaints received by Passenger Focus. These issues were also publicly aired at the Stakeholder Forum in May co-hosted with Passenger Focus.

The main areas of dissatisfaction with the timetable change have been mentioned above. We have continued to offer advice and some support to the campaigns. However from discussions with Southeastern and the DfT it is clear that a contract change would be required if any of the campaigns are to succeed as there is no appetite for additional costs. In the short term as from the May 2010 timetable change, we have successfully persuaded Southeastern to re-instate services to match school children journey patterns which in some instances had been removed as an oversight.

Performance has recovered from the initial problems of the new timetable and winter disruption. However, service on the Hastings line via Tunbridge Wells and on the Kent Coast via Chatham is poor. Network Rail accounts for the majority of the failures. Southeasterns aggressive operational service recovery is very frustrating for passengers on the Kent Coast especially where they have lost peak service frequencies.

Capacity, Southeastern have been reticent about sharing the completed loading counts. Overall there are 5000 more passengers in the peak since December 2009, 4000 of whom are high speed passengers. The following overcrowding issues have been addressed – an extra carriage for the Hastings line (up 12 from 11); reductions on some metro services to use stock elsewhere and the reduction of some high speed services on the Kent Coast via Chatham from 12 to 6.

- *The Kent RUS*

This was published in January 2010. It focuses on the classic mainline peak services into London from Kent as well as off peak travel into London and locally. The main committed schemes apart from CP4 capacity plan are the East Kent re-signalling, the Thameslink programme, Crossrail and freight capability.

There is limited opportunity to provide additional capacity on the classic route via London Bridge or Victoria. Some train lengthening could be possible on the Victoria services via Sole street and via Maidstone East with Selective Door Opening. The RUS envisages that additional capacity can be provided using the High Speed network and extending peak train lengths from 6 to 12 car and introducing new service patterns and stops. However in our response we highlighted the additional cost to passengers as well as the possible further reduction of existing classic services to the City.

Now the RUS is published, concern is building from passengers on the Hastings Line opposed to the possible loss of direct Cannon Street services under the Thameslink programme. The RUS has set out major long term issues which Passenger Focus will need to monitor. We continue to work with local campaigners on their issues and attend meetings with Network Rail to review all of the London and South East RUSs.

- Our focus on dealing with disruption is ongoing from last year. The latest NPS results show a modest improvement from 26 to 29% in how well Southeastern dealt with delays, but this is still below the London and South East average. We met with Charles Horton Southeasterns MD in March to discuss their approach and constraints. It is clear that the industry heritage information systems and process are not fit for purpose. For example it can take between 15 to 30 minutes for delay information to be validated and the system uses a single channel radio unlike LU. However, he was equally frank in admitting that an anti-establishment staff culture made it difficult to persuade staff of the importance of giving passengers good information.

Passenger Focus now has an observer status on Southeastern PIDD steering group. We will be giving a presentation to the steering group at the next meeting. We also regularly share our own Ipsos Mori panel feedback at our monthly meetings. Interestingly, a breakdown of the routes shows high speed passenger satisfaction is at 47%

3. Other issues

- Southeasterns approach to penalty fare is generating an increase in complaints for this category. We have agreed that we will meet with them to review the circumstances in which enforcement is taking place versus the need to exercise discretion.
- We will also be working to improve train presentation and cleanliness. Depot visits are being scheduled for July.
- Southeastern are now in revenue support because of the downturn in the economy.
- The development of Cannon Street, Blackfriars and London Bridge Stations continues at pace. Blackfriars is closed till Jan 2011 and passengers are encouraged to use City Thameslink.

4. Confidential issues (optional)