



BEXHILL RAIL ACTION GROUP

RESPONSE TO GTR/SOUTHERN 2018 TIMETABLE CONSULTATION

Q 38 (Victoria to Ore)

Proposal: *To create a stand-alone Victoria to Hastings service, with Southeastern serving Ore with its Charing Cross service*

Response: BRAG has a fundamental concern that this would only replicate the current experience of the 07.47 from Victoria/09.58 from Hastings with its increasingly random service curtailments at Eastbourne when running late, thereby creating an unacceptable 2-hour gap in service between Bexhill and Victoria via Gatwick Airport. The current arrangement of alternating Victoria/Brighton services to/from Ore offers a robust turnaround.

Southeastern cannot offer a commitment to extending its Charing Cross service to Ore - whose passenger numbers are significantly increasing under the current Coastway-oriented service pattern – because this franchise will expire in 2018 and its future shape is unknown.

We are disappointed that no consideration has been given to running separate Hastings/Eastbourne and Littlehampton to Victoria services, which would address serious overcrowding on these services both on the BML itself and south of Haywards Heath.

Consideration should be given to stopping certain services at Normans Bay on Summer Sundays to meet increasing tourist demand

Q 49 (Coastway East)

Proposal: *To increase Brighton Lewes frequency to up to 6 trains per hour stopping at Falmer*

Response: We support the proposal so long as the Ashford service is not disrupted. Consider extending some off-peak Lewes shuttle services to Eastbourne; and run an additional hourly Brighton – Eastbourne train on Sundays, to relieve overcrowding on the Brighton-Ashford service and provide a more regular service between Brighton and Eastbourne & vice versa

Q 51 (Coastway East)

Proposal: *To reduce total journey time by omitting London Road and Moulsecomb station stops on the service.*

Response: Reduced journey-times are welcomed in principle. But the key factor must be the views of the users of these 2 stations.

Q52 (Brighton-Ashford via Marshlink)

Proposal (Options): 1) *Truncate at Eastbourne, increasing journey times by approx. 5 mins* 2) *Truncate at Hastings, increasing journey times by approx. 27 mins* 3) *Retain the through service, “but with no realistic opportunity to acquire or improve rolling stock”* 4) *Other ideas invited*

Response: SUPPORT OPTION 3. **We strongly oppose Options 1+2** because of the negative impact both on the local economy and passengers making long-distance high-value journeys via Ashford, and/or travelling to stations west of Eastbourne.

- The methodology of the passenger count quoted in the consultation document is disputed because of daily/weekly variations within passenger flows to/from and on the Marshlink. It is also likely to be skewed by a small number of overcrowded peak services. What the data **does** indicate is that passenger numbers between



stations west of Hastings and Hastings itself to/from the Marshlink are more or less equal. The issue is how to manage loadings west of Hastings. This suggests that solutions other than truncation should be examined. A serious attempt must be made to identify workable solutions which are both in the passenger interest and which also supports regeneration of the local communities' economy uniquely afforded by this important regional service.

- Southern to be asked to provide additional capacity to ease overcrowding e.g. 2 additional Class 170s, reforming the Southern diesel fleet to 3 cars, Hybrid Class 377s, other rolling stock released through electrification projects elsewhere.
- Southern to consider timetable solutions to relieve overcrowding on the Brighton–Ashford service including adjusting stopping patterns and timings on the busiest diesel and electric services
- Reassess effectiveness of advice given to peak-hour passengers about loadings on the busiest services.
- The Kent Route Study is pending, with proposals to upgrade the Marshlink with direct services to London St. Pancras. Therefore, any proposed re-shaping of Southern services should be aligned with firm plans to offer additional capacity on sections of the route.

Hugh Sharp

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BRAG, formed in 2005, is a membership organisation representing the interests of rail passengers using the stations of Bexhill, Collington, Cooden Beach and Normans Bay (2 million passengers annually)

Distribution:

Huw Merriman MP for Bexhill & Battle
Amber Rudd MP for Hastings & Rye
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Maria Caulfield, MP for Lewes
Caroline Ansell, MP for Eastbourne
Caroline Lucas, MP for Brighton Pavilion
Cllr Carl Maynard, Lead Member Transport and Environment, East Sussex County Council
Cllr Rupert Simmons, Lead Member for Economy, East Sussex County Council
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Cllr Ian Hollidge, Lead Member Environment and Transport, Rother District Council
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Graham Marley, Chief Executive, Lets Do Business, Hastings
Cllr Matthew Balfour, Lead Member Transport and Environment, Kent County Council
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Cllr GD Clarkson, Leader, Ashford Borough Council
Cllr Ian Davey, Lead Member Transport and Environment, Brighton and Hove City Council
Cllr David Tutt, Leader, Eastbourne Borough Council
Cllr Bob Standley, Leader, Wealden District Council
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Rail User Groups: SHRIMP, MLAG, THWART, ESRA
Southeastern Railway