
BEXHILL RAIL ACTION GROUP (BRAG)

GTR December 2015 Timetable Consultation

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Dear Sir/Madam

GTR December 2015 Timetable Consultation – Submission by Bexhill Rail Action Group (BRAG)

The Committee welcomes this opportunity to respond to aspects of the consultation which are relevant to Bexhill rail users:

Q9

Do you support our plans to reduce the journey time between London, Lewes, Eastbourne and Hastings by placing the calls at Wivelsfield and Plumpton into one train?

BRAG has always advocated faster services, and believes these proposals represent a modest way forward **in the short to medium term**. However, they **fail** to address the equally important issue of **overcrowding**. In the shoulder-peaks, and on Saturday mornings and evenings, standing is common north of Lewes or even Polegate on Victoria services. Many trains are limited to only 4 cars.

Portioned working has delivered half-hourly Victoria services to the East and West Coastways, but there has **never** been an overall increase in off-peak capacity - despite increases in passenger usage. BRAG **questions** the provision of an **eighth** train between London and Brighton each hour in this draft timetable, and notes that the seven existing off-peak services to/from Brighton generally run with excess capacity. This will increase still further when longer trains are introduced on Thameslink services.

BRAG therefore considers portioned working south of Haywards Heath to be unacceptable beyond 2018 when Thameslink works are completed.

From the limited details in the sample draft timetable, BRAG also queries the following:

- (a) Narrow 'connecting' times at Hampden Park on the down 'slower' service.
- (b) The robustness of the turnaround time at Eastbourne (9 minutes) on the slower service.
- (c) Implausibly short connecting times at Lewes between Seaford and London services (as little as 1-2 minutes in some instances).

Q14

What do you think of Sunday trains calling at Three Oaks and Winchelsea alternately every two hours on Sundays noting that there will be a slight increase (2 minutes) in journey times to/from Ashford International to accommodate the calls?

BRAG recognises the aspirations of rural communities for a usable rail service seven days a week, and does not object to this proposal **providing it does not jeopardise connections to/from HS1 services** at Ashford which were recently re-cast in the January 2015 timetable, to the benefit of Marshlink passengers.

A similar situation exists at **Normans Bay**, where there is also unmet demand for a Sunday service, at least in the summer months. BRAG would like this issue to be considered further.

Yours faithfully

Hugh Sharp
Chairman, Bexhill Rail Action Group
January 2015