



**Southeastern
December 2019
Timetable
Public Consultation**

**Our response
November 2019**





Contents

1. Foreword	2
2. Overview	3
3. Highlights in the December 2019 timetable changes	4
4. Feedback we received from passengers and stakeholders	6
5. Major changes to our proposals since our consultation	11
6. Feedback to be considered for May 2020 timetable	13

1. Foreword

Ahead of the changes we are making on 15th December 2019 we asked our stakeholders and passengers for their feedback on what we had proposed. We have around 1,000 stakeholders on our network, with 640,000 passenger journeys taking place on Southeastern services everyday. We therefore know how important it is to capture the views of passengers and stakeholders across our network, to ensure that the revisions we make bi-annually to our timetable deliver continued improvements.

The proposals we put forward provide new benefits for our passengers in a number of areas: shorter journey times on many Highspeed services; shorter journey times on many Mainline services and; more efficient planning of our train timetable to increase reliability.

In the latter case this may mean that some services will see minor tweaks to their scheduled time, but by making small changes to the timetable we can make services more efficient by reducing congestion between trains and improving reliability.

Increased passenger growth across the Southeastern network has been an important feature across our network, and a development which we will need to continue accommodating as more people use our services. A high volume of growth has been particularly noticed on our Metro services, at stations within Greater London.

As a result of this, we will be increasing the calling time for some services in peak periods, to provide more time for passengers to board and alight our services. This change is expected to improve the reliability and the safety of the

operation of these services, providing a greater overall benefit for passengers, though it may mean an increase to the scheduled journey time by 1-2 minutes on some of the services affected.

We also consulted on one important change further ahead on the south coast of East Sussex; the withdrawal of Southeastern services between Hastings and Ore. Usage on these services has tended to be extremely low and our assessment indicated that removing the three Southeastern services would improve reliability on this highly congested part of the network. Following the feedback we received from local stakeholders we have amended our plans to ensure we have more time to comprehensively assess the impact on local passengers and explore alternative solutions.

Our driving principle remains delivering the most benefit to the greatest number of users and it is an ongoing process to ensure we achieve this. We look forward at consulting again with our passengers and stakeholders ahead of the next bi-annual round of timetable changes in May 2020.



David Statham

David Statham
Managing Director,
Southeastern

2. Overview

This report sets out the key timetable changes which we are bringing forward on 15th December 2019. It outlines the key pieces of feedback we received and the issues and concerns which our passengers and stakeholders raised, and highlights of the key changes which we have made to our timetables since the consultation took place in the Summer.

The changes we are introducing on 15th December 2019 will mean:

- Shorter journeys and better connections on many Highspeed and Mainline services.
- More boarding time at some stations to accommodate passenger growth.
- Changes to rolling stock and train lengths to improve accessibility and make best use of capacity available.

We received a total of 678 submissions to our consultation on these changes, which is more than 50% higher than our previous consultation round at the end of 2018, furthering our ambition to gather the views of a much larger number of users. We have also seen responses submitted from more places on our network, ensuring that the feedback we are receiving is broader and spread more proportionally across all the areas we serve.

Nearly three-quarters of those who responded said they agreed completely, or to some extent, with the timetable changes we proposed. In the responses we received for this consultation

round we noticed that considerably more Highspeed users responded – which is no doubt a result of the number of changes we proposed for the Highspeed services.

We continue to receive a large volume of feedback around where our passengers and stakeholders want to see improvements. By far, capacity continues to be the issue where those who use our services want to see change, in terms of longer trains, more frequent services, and new additional services at more stations, especially on the Highspeed network. We have set out our response to this and to the other issues raised by consultation respondents in this document.

This is not the end of the process of consultation and improvement – we propose new revisions and improvements to our timetable twice each year and we will consult again with passengers and stakeholders in the coming months.

Any feedback we have been unable to consider for the December 2019 changes will be re-evaluated for the May 2020 and December 2020 changes.



3. Highlights in the December 2019 timetable changes

Shorter journey times on Highspeed services

One of the changes we are pleased to introduce on our network is a reduction in journey times for a number of our Highspeed services, that will save time for many of our passengers who use these services.

We will reduce journey times on the following services:

- Non-stop services between Ashford and Canterbury West will be 1 minute, 30 seconds quicker, in both directions.
- The 07:48 Margate to London St Pancras service will see its journey time reduced by 7 minutes.
- The 06:53 Maidstone West to London St Pancras service will see its journey time reduced by 2 minutes.

Shorter journey times on Mainline services

We will reduce journey times on more Mainline services, building on the reductions we made in May 2019 and saving time for even more passengers using our services.

- 2-minute reduction in journey times for the 06:00 and 06:56 Ashford to London Victoria services, which will start later without any change to destination arrival times.
- 06:30 Ramsgate to London Victoria service will arrive 4 minutes earlier, following rescheduling on the Orpington to Victoria route.
- 08:40 London Cannon Street to Hastings service will run semi-fast between Hastings and Tonbridge.
- 7-minute shorter journey time from Ramsgate for passengers using the 07:05 Ramsgate to London Charing Cross service, which will start later without any change to its arrival time.

Better connections

We will also make connections between services quicker and more efficient at a number of key points on the network, reducing overall journey times for many of our passengers.

- 08:05 Ramsgate to London Charing Cross service will start 7 minutes earlier and will arrive earlier at all stations on its route, enabling passengers to make earlier connections to London St Pancras and London Victoria.
- 19:15 Grove Park to Bromley North service will start 3 minutes later so passengers on the 18:48 London Cannon St to Orpington service can connect at Grove Park
- Through agreement with Govia Thameslink Railway, the 06:52 and 07:52 Sevenoaks to London Blackfriars services run by Thameslink will start 7 minutes earlier, with longer calling time at Bromley South to allow passengers from Shoreham and Eynsford to connect to earlier London Victoria services from Swanley run by Southeastern.

More boarding time at some stations to accommodate passenger growth

There will be a small increase in journey time at some stations on the network which have experienced passenger growth, to allow more

time for passengers to safely board and alight services at peak hours. This will mean better reliability on these services and fewer delays, delivering an overall benefit for passengers. The increase in journey time on services affected will be no more than 1 minute on weekdays and no more than 2 minutes on Sundays.

The services affected include:

- London Victoria services serving all stations between London Victoria and Bromley South and Orpington will call 30 seconds longer at Brixton.
- Half-hourly London Victoria to Orpington services between 16:58 and 18:58 inclusive will start 1-minute earlier and call 30 seconds longer at West Dulwich and Sydenham Hill.
- Half-hourly London Victoria to Bromley South services between 17:13 and 18:43 inclusive will start 1-minute earlier and call 30 seconds longer at West Dulwich and Sydenham Hill.
- 18:31 London Charing Cross to Tunbridge Wells service will call for an additional minute at Orpington.
- London Victoria to Gravesend services (via Lewisham and Dartford) will call for 30 seconds longer at Peckham Rye.



4. Feedback we received from passengers and stakeholders

Vast majority of respondents were commuters

84% of those who responded to our consultation told us that they use Southeastern services 3 or more times a week.

Most respondents travel to London terminals

The top five destinations were London terminals, in the following order:

1. London St Pancras International
2. London Cannon Street
3. London Victoria
4. London Charing Cross
5. London Bridge

Areas with HighSpeed services saw higher response rates

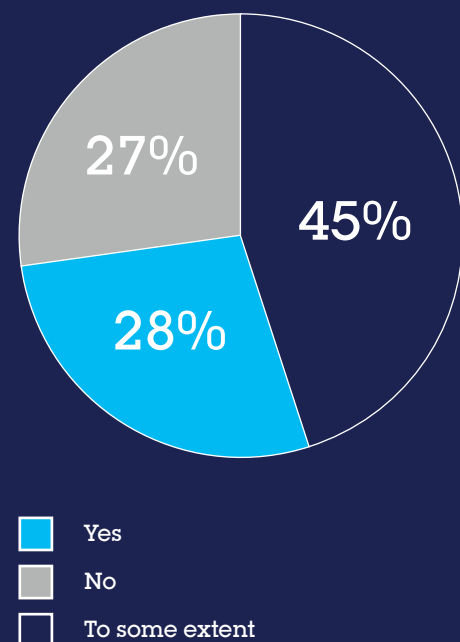
Respondents to our consultation were more likely to travel from stations with Highspeed services. And three of the five stations which saw the top response rate were located in or near Gravesham Borough.

- Ashford International
- Canterbury West
- Gravesend
- Higham
- Rochester

Broad agreement with our proposals

Passengers and stakeholders were broadly in agreement with the changes we proposed for December. Almost three-quarters of respondents (73%) said they agreed or agreed 'to some extent' with our proposals.

Do you agree with our proposals for December 2019?



Only a third of respondents said they would be directly affected by the proposals we outlined for December 2019

Key themes raised by respondents

Capacity and train lengths

Capacity continues to be the top issue for passengers and stakeholders on our network. The number of comments we received about this issue was vastly higher than for any other issue raised by respondents.

Many respondents requested longer trains and/or more frequent services including (but not limited to) users on the: Maidstone East Line; Hastings Line, Woolwich Line, Hayes Line, Bexleyheath Line, Grove Park Line and the Medway Valley Line. There were also a number of comments about Highspeed services in particular and the levels of crowding on Highspeed services.

With the entirety of our Metro, Mainline and Highspeed fleets deployed on the network, there are inevitably significant challenges in provide additional carriages in places where passengers wish to see more capacity, as it would mean taking these carriages away from services on other parts of our network.

We remain committed to ensuring capacity – including train lengths and frequency of service – is allocated to where it best used and spread proportionally across the network, while being mindful to ensure that passengers in one or more locations are not unfairly disadvantaged by any changes we make.

Journey times

We had a large number of comments in response to our proposals around additional calling time at some stations our Metro services call at, within Greater London, to accommodate increased passenger usage.

We had feedback from respondents in various places on our network that more needs to be done to reduce journey times on Southeastern train services.

However, in many cases, suggestions put forward by respondents in a certain area – such as missing stops further on in the journey – would negatively affect users in another area and would not be feasible to implement.

We will continue to look at our timetable ahead of the next two rounds of timetable changes in May and December 2020, to see if further journey time reductions can be made.

Requests for more HighSpeed services

A number of respondents from stations currently being served by Highspeed services requested a higher frequency of service, including Folkestone Central, Dover Priory, Ramsgate and Gravesend.

We had respondents at a number of points on our network without Highspeed services request that Highspeed services increase the number of stations they call at, with Higham, Westenhanger and Sandling stations specifically mentioned by respondents.

However, we had other respondents suggest that Highspeed services should reduce the number of stations they call at, particularly in the Medway area, to shorten overall journey times. One respondent suggested that we designate only one Medway Town for use by Highspeed services.

Respondents from Canterbury were pleased to see a reduction in journey times on Highspeed services to and from Canterbury West.

With the Highspeed fleet fully deployed we will continue to ensure our services are deployed effectively to maximise use of the capacity we have, whilst also keeping journey times as fast as possible on these services.

Gaps in service provision

Respondents on some parts of the network highlighted gaps in service at their local station, with the most prominent of these being a large gap in morning peak service on the Chatham Mainline, in places like Chatham and Sittingbourne, into London Cannon Street.

We will review and re-evaluate this feedback ahead of the next rounds of timetable changes in May and December 2020, to see if there is any opportunity to reduce gaps in service provision at points on the network where they are particularly acute.

Earlier and later services

A number of respondents requested that we run earlier services from their station, with the majority of these in relation to our Sunday timetable.

A number of respondents from various stations on our network requested that we run earlier services on the weekdays. Most of these respondents travel from smaller stations.

There is a significant volume of minor maintenance work and track inspection undertaken overnight by our colleagues at Network Rail who are responsible for managing the track. On Sunday mornings the route opening times are later as a result of the lower volumes of passengers wishing to travel which provides opportunities for the essential maintenance works which take slightly longer.

With the strict safety regimes in place for track quality standards, we are unable to push the route opening times earlier in most locations. However, we will continue to work with Network Rail to investigate opportunities to enhance our service where possible.

Key proposals mentioned in responses

Swapping the Orpington and Chelsfield stops on the 18:41 and 18:45 services from London Charing Cross

Comments were broadly positive about this.

There was some misunderstanding that we would be reducing stops across all our services to Orpington, which is not the case. More generally, respondents also said they wanted more capacity on these services, which was a broader theme across our network.

Swapping destinations between the 17:39 service from London Cannon St, which will now terminate at Orpington, and the 17:26 service from London Charing Cross, which will now extend to Sevenoaks

There were concerns that this swap would remove the connection at Chelsfield for the 17:44 service from London Charing Cross. We have assessed this and do not believe this will affect connections at Chelsfield.

There were further concerns from respondents that some would have a longer commute and a longer gap between services from London Cannon St as a result.

Swapping the stops at Minister and Sturry from the 07:48 Margate to St Pancras service with a new service 20 minutes earlier

We had a mixed response to this proposal.

There were some positive comments from users from Margate and Ramsgate who said this would provide significant time saving for them and a positive comment from a user in the Minster and Sturry area who said it would improve journeys to Canterbury.

However, a number of other users from the local area said it would have a negative effect and others raised concerns that it may remove opportunities for children to get to school.

Our analysis has indicated that this should not be the case, however we acknowledge that this change may cause significantly extra journey time for a small number of passengers. While we continue to believe that the benefits of this change outweigh the downsides, we will monitor the introduction of this change to ensure no unforeseen issues arise and review the impact of this change in future timetable consultations.





Swapping the Ebbsfleet stop from the 06:53 Maidstone West to St Pancras service to the 06:16 Margate to St Pancras service

There were a number of points raised by users of the 06:16 that an additional stop would cause crowding on an already busy service. Other users of this service said the additional journey time could risk them missing journey connections or would potentially make them late for work.

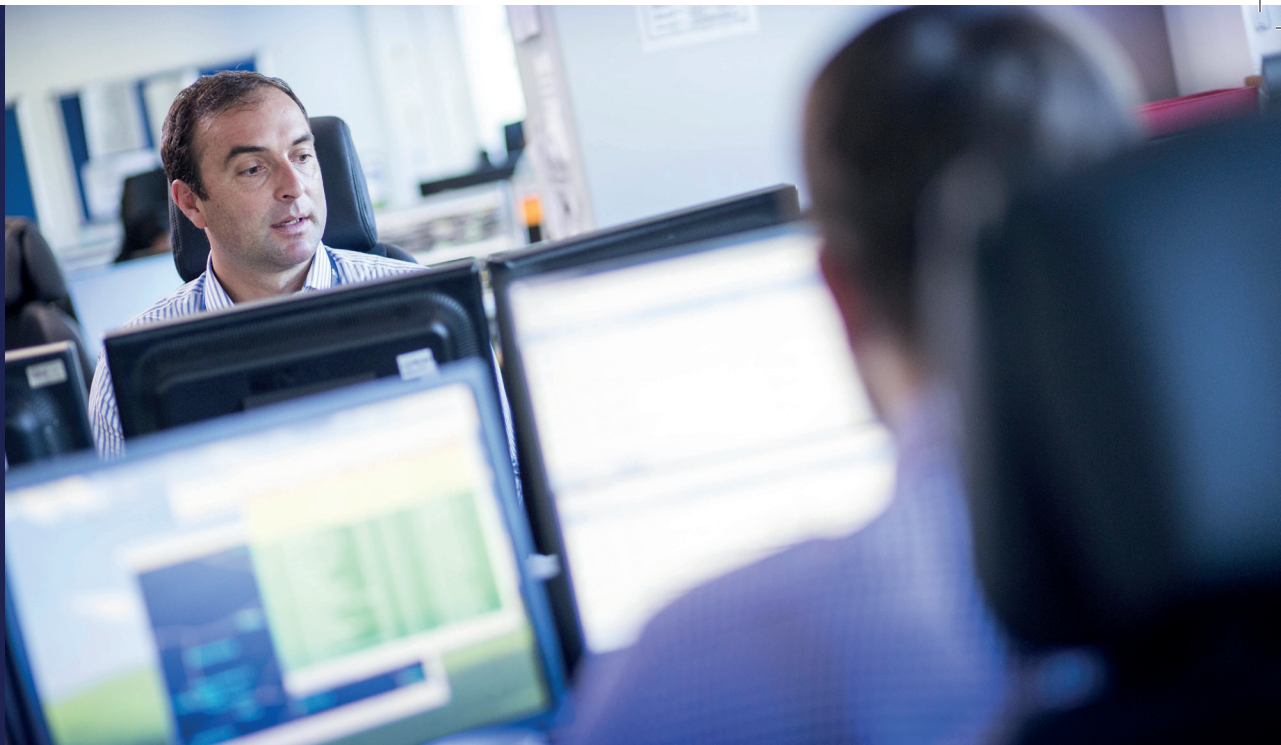
However, we had positive comments from users of the 06:53, who said it would mean more capacity on their journey. We remain of the view that the new arrangement will result in a better spread of usage between services.

Proposal to withdraw Southeastern services from Ore Station from May 2020

There was a misunderstanding from a number of respondents that the proposal was to remove all train services from Ore. Our proposal only relates to the three daily Southeastern services. Southern Railway services would continue to serve Ore.

Some respondents told us that it would not be a major issue, one respondent on another part of the network told us the rolling stock could be better used elsewhere, while others said they would be negatively affected by these changes.

We have outlined our response to feedback on this proposal in the next section within this report..



5. Major changes to our proposals since our consultation

The proposed withdrawal of Southeastern services to Ore station is postponed

To improve reliability on this part of the network, we proposed that, from May 2020, we would withdraw the three Southeastern services which call at Ore station during the week.

On the basis of the responses we received, we have decided to postpone this change until December 2020. This postponement will allow us further time to consult, assess the impact of this proposal, and see if an alternative solution can be found which provides a compromise.

When we have made a final decision we will publish this information as soon as possible.

Tweaks to rolling stock formations

In December 2019, we will make changes to train formations (train lengths) to allocate rolling stock more efficiently across the network and ensure that we use the capacity we have to its full potential.

These changes to rolling stock formations will:

- Alleviate overcrowding on some of our busiest services through the provision of additional carriages.
- Spread the benefits of modern rolling stock more evenly across the network, including more modern rolling stock on the Sheerness line.
- Ensure all of our train services will comply with the Department for Transport's accessibility requirements from January 1 2020.*

To make this happen we will be reducing formations on some services where capacity is less needed, or where it is under-used for all but a small portion of its journey.

These changes include – but are not limited to – the following services:

Morning peak

05:47 Ashford International to London Victoria – increase of one carriage
07:11 Folkestone Central to London Cannon St – increase of one carriage
08:23 Barnehurst to London Victoria – increase of two carriages
08:37 Dartford to London Victoria – reduction of two carriages
09:02 Dartford to London Victoria – increase of two carriages

Evening peak

17:12 London Victoria to Sheerness – increase of two carriages
17:19 London Blackfriars to Beckenham Junction – reduction of two carriages
17:40 London Victoria to Ramsgate – increase of one carriage
18:07 London Victoria to Maidstone East – reduction of two carriages
18:19 London Blackfriars to Beckenham Junction – reduction of two carriages
18:45 London Cannon St to Ramsgate – increase of one carriage

Please note that these changes will not affect the service timetable

* With the exception of services on the Bromley North shuttle line which have been granted a dispensation.



6. Feedback to be considered for May 2020 timetable

Our consultation with passengers and stakeholders over the timetabling of our services is an ongoing process which we revisit at bi-annual intervals.

Any feedback or suggestions which are feasible, but we are unable to consider for the December 2019 timetable changes, will be re-evaluated and considered for the following round of timetable changes in May 2020 and December 2020.

In our May 2019 consultation we acknowledged that connections were an important issue where our stakeholders and passengers wanted to see improvements. We committed to re-evaluating this feedback for the December 2019 changes and as a result we are implementing timetable tweaks that will mean a significant improvement in connections and journeys for a large number of our passengers.

We also know that capacity is an important issue for users across the network. At our September Stakeholder Forum it was the number one priority for all those who attended. However, with our entire train fleet deployed, it also remains the one of the most challenging issues to address. The only way we can improve the use of capacity is to ensure rolling stock is deployed where it's most needed, which we achieve by making revisions to our service timetable and reallocating carriages to the busiest parts of the network.

Going forward, we have committed to consulting with our stakeholders and passengers on changes further ahead, to provide us with a longer timeframe to consider feedback and to give us more scope to make revisions to these proposals.



southeastern

Floor 2, 4 More London Riverside, London SE1 2AU
southeasternrailway.co.uk

London & South Eastern Railway Limited trading as Southeastern
Registered in England No. 0460660
Registered Office: 3rd Floor, 41-51 Grey Street, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 6EE