

# December 2018 Timetable Consultation

Ranil Jayawardena, M.P., and residents' consultation response to South Western Railway

## Key Message

"Most recent timetable proposal—protecting the service at Hook, Winchfield and Fleet".

## Key Recommendations

1. Adopt the revised<sup>†</sup> proposals—protecting the level of service from Hook (HOK), Winchfield (WNF) and Fleet (FLE)—rather than the original ones
2. We would support more calls at Clapham Junction, along with more services calling at Fleet and Farnborough
3. We would support these additional services in (2) above, so long as none of our local stations lose out

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## Background

1. This is a response to South Western Railway (SWR)'s consultation on a proposed new timetable to come into action in December 2018.
2. Thousands of residents—3,333—signed our petition<sup>1</sup> to the House of Commons against SWR's original timetable proposals, urging SWR not to remove current A.M. peak-period additions.
3. Additionally, over 852 residents signed my special consultation response card—delivered to SWR by me; backing and supporting the points in this response to SWR.
4. Throughout this submission, the following key terms are used: (a) "original proposal", which refers to SWR's 'Table 155 to London'<sup>2</sup>; and (b) "revised<sup>†</sup> proposal", which refers to a modified version of 'Table 155 REVISED BASINGSTOKE AND ALTON'<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> P002075. Presented by Mr Ranil Jayawardena MP, Official Report, 7 November 2017; Vol. 630, c. 1438. Available at: <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2017-11-07/debates/8B1AAC31-8A63-477D-840D-B38AFD9F4178/SouthWesternRailway>

<sup>2</sup> SWR. Table 155 to London. <https://www.southwesternrailway.com/~media/pdfs/timetable-consultation/swr-table-155-pdf>

<sup>†</sup> 'Revised proposals' refer to the most recent proposals—communicated directly to us by SWR—which include extra calls at FNB (on the services departing BSK 06.26, 06.56 and 07.26) rather than Brookwood (BKO) in addition to 'Table 155 REVISED BASINGSTOKE AND ALTON'. It DOES NOT refer to 'Table 155 REVISED BASINGSTOKE AND ALTON' without extra FNB calls.

<sup>3</sup> SWR. Table 155 REVISED BASINGSTOKE AND ALTON. <https://www.southwesternrailway.com/~media/pdfs/timetable-consultation/swr-table-155-revised-basingstoke-and-alton-v2.pdf>

## We support the revised<sup>†</sup> proposals—protecting Hook, Winchfield and Fleet services

### SWR QUESTION: Hook and Winchfield AM peak calls. (Page 10)<sup>4</sup>

5. SWR asks whether we agree that the peak train service they are providing is the right one. We DO NOT agree that the peak train service provided at these stations is the right one in the original proposal. We DO agree with the peak train service provided at these stations in the revised<sup>†</sup> proposal (as a starting point).

6. SWR asks whether they should consider some adjustments of calls on the slower services. We DO agree with the adjustments made by SWR in the revised<sup>†</sup> proposal, protecting current levels of service—four trains per hour towards Waterloo, calling at both HOK and WNF, during peak-period.

7. As highlighted above, 3,333 residents signed a petition against SWR's original timetable proposals, urging SWR not to remove current A.M. peak-period additions. The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport observed that "both the Department [for Transport] and SWR recognise the concerns raised from the people of North East Hampshire".<sup>5</sup> The full petition text is available in Appendix 1.

8. Under SWR's original proposal, HOK and WNF would drop from five services arriving at Waterloo between 07.30 and 08.45, to two. This reduction of over the half the A.M. peak-period services is wholly unacceptable.

9. HOK and WNF stations have 1,192,904 entries and exits per year—many local residents work in and commute to London, although school and college students travel from HOK and WNF to FLE and FNB also.

10. Further, the original proposals would force HOK and WNF commuters to spend extra time and money driving to and parking at BSK or FLE—increasing pollution, congestion, on-street parking, platform-crowding and inconvenience for all. Further, many of the services would effectively be unusable, as some services fill up at Winchester before reaching BSK while others stopping at FLE would be full with commuters from HOK and WNF who are currently spread across a greater number of services.

11. These original proposals must not and need not be implemented—as the good service provided to HOK, WNF and Fleet during the evening peak-period

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<sup>4</sup> SWR. Timetable consultation for December 2018. <https://www.southwesternrailway.com/~media/files/timetable-consultation-dec18.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> 28 November 2017, Vol. 632, c2P. Available at: <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2017-11-28/debates/17112877000019/SouthWesternRailway>

demonstrates—which is why we support the most recently communicated revised<sup>t</sup> timetable.

12. Further, in their new franchise, SWR promised “more space for passengers including a: 35% increase morning peak capacity into London Waterloo”. The original timetable proposals—which, for commuters from HOK and WNF, cut morning peak-period services to WAT by more than half—would seem not to deliver 35% capacity increases for HOK and WNF residents.

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## **We support more calls at Clapham Junction, Fleet and Farnborough**

### *Clapham Junction*

13. We recognise—with regret—SWR’s point that additional calls at Clapham Junction (CLJ) are unlikely as each service that calls at CLJ removes another entire service from the tracks altogether, i.e. the choice each time is between (a) running one train that stops at CLJ; or (b) running two trains that run straight through to WAT.

14. Further, we recognise that no direct services to CLJ between 08.00 and 09.00 are cut, but that by reducing the trains calling at CLJ on the fast line before 08.00 from six to two, SWR is able to run four additional services to WAT.

15. We would, however, welcome any additional calls at CLJ that can be made without losing our other local services—in particular, something akin to the current service that arrives at CLJ at 07.20 after calling at HOK, WNF and FLE.

### *Fleet and Farnborough*

16. As clearly stated above, we support existing levels of service at HOK, WNF and FLE, rather than cutting HOK and WNF calls to increase those at FLE and FNB, because of the negative impact such a reduction would have on FLE passengers and nearby Fleet residents. We do, however, support additional calls at FLE and FNB, where this is not to the detriment of other local stations.

17. The third most common travel flow from both HOK and WNF—after London and BSK—is to FNB. SWR have listened to our representations on this point and indicated to us that three extra calls at FNB will be added to the revised timetable (departing BSK at 06.26, 06.56 and 07.26), stating in correspondence that: “This gives Hook, Winchfield and Fleet each 4 trains per hour to both Farnborough and London”. It is this version of the revised<sup>†</sup> proposal—including the extra FNB stops—that we support as a starting point, though we believe it can be improved further.

18. If the extra calls at FNB require SWR to remove three BKO calls, BKO (which, as a matter of fact, has a lower patronage than either FLE or FNB) would still have seven direct services arriving into WAT between 07.30 and 08.45 ( $\pm 0.01$ ). We would therefore support this action—as it better reflects patronage and will result in faster services than having stops at both FNB and BKO.

19. In fact, we would go further and suggest that BKO is removed from the calling pattern of more services on the BSK line, to either speed up services, or to provide additional services that call at FLE.

20. While we support SWR adding more calls at FNB to the services departing BSK (06.26, 06.56 and 07.26), if (19) above is not possible, we would again ask SWR if it is possible for one of the three services to call at FLE instead of FNB. This would then mean passengers from FLE and FNB both see net gains—as would school and college students and others travelling from HOK or WNF to FLE or FNB.

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**We would support additional services so long as none of our local stations lose out**

21. To reiterate, while we fully support adding any extra calls at FLE, FNB or CLJ—particularly during the peak-periods—we DO NOT BACK any changes that would require reductions to the service provided at our local stations (HOK, WNF and FLE).

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## Other points

22. We agree with operating weekday off-peak services throughout Saturdays. Ideally this should operate on Sundays also. The SWR franchise improvements promised “more Sunday services across the Main Line, with the equivalent of a weekday service after 1:00pm”. This should be delivered.

23. We believe that all services stopping at HOK, WNF and FLE should be formed of 10-car class 444 trains or similar length class 442 trains—ideally implemented as soon as possible. The addition of two additional carriages—and more comfortable seating—will provide more seats (and more of the right sort of seats) on journeys that really should not be termed “suburban” for they are not metro-type services. We should not have class 450 HC trains under any circumstances—and the class 450 trains should be phased out as a result of the above.

24. We believe that more Standard Class seats should not be at the cost of First Class seats, as these subsidise the cost of the railway for Standard Class users. The quality of these seats should be maintained, as a minimum (but, ideally, improved), so that it is an attractive offer to those who might wish to pay the premium. It should be an aspiration to grow this market—not cut it—so that First Class income is drawn in to keep fares lower for others.

25. Given the political and public support for these services, we hope that SWR will listen, just as they have shown they are listening in other ways. We welcome that SWR have committed to a range of schemes for HOK, WNF and FLE stations—including customer information screen improvements; station re-painting; enhanced CCTV to improve security; and WiFi at stations that seamlessly links to on-board, improved WiFi. Of course, these are only any good if there are decent train services in the first place!

## Appendix 1. Petition.

*To the Honourable the Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in Parliament assembled.*

*The Humble petition of the people of North East Hampshire.*

*Sheweth that urgent action must be taken concerning the South Western Railway and the change of their timetable coming into force in December 2018; further that this line is particularly highly valued, especially the Fleet, Hook and Winchfield stations; further that if any morning peak-period services are removed this will be detrimental to commuters and is clearly not in the best interests of our community; and further that these proposals need not and must not be implemented—as demonstrated by the good Hook and Winchfield services proposed during the evening peak-period.*

*Wherefore your petitioners pray that your honourable House urges HM Government to take all possible steps to urge South Western Railway to reconsider this decision and to make sure that the train timetable considers the economic, social and familial implications to commuters across North East Hampshire.*

*And your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray, &c.*

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## Appendix 2. A selection of responses from constituents

The following is just a fraction of the feedback SWR's original proposals have resulted in:

"reducing frequencies and/or extending journey times would be a backwards step"

"A withdrawal of service from these stations would be so detrimental to our constituency."

"A sad return to the days of Dr Beeching and the demise of the rural economy"

"These changes are actually potentially career changing"

"That's really disappointing"

"Keeping in mind all the building work planned for those areas, there will undoubtedly be an increase in commuters"

"I trust that sense will prevail and their consultation will hear the needs of the Hook and Winchfield passengers"

"with potentially halving the number of peak services from Winchfield the parking will clearly be unsustainable at Fleet"

"This is outrageous and will make my commute from Winchfield untenable"

"with juggling shifts and child care a reduced service will have a major impact"

"The rail service is critical to those of us who live in Hook and commute for work"

"My husband and I are furious about this"

"Simply ridiculous at a time in which 1800 new homes are being built in the village"

"Morning changes are a disaster and basically you can't get in for an 8.30 am meeting anymore without leaving before 7am"

"Simply put...Unacceptable!"

"We need this service."

"This is absolutely appalling"

"so we are getting so many new houses and flats being built and they want to cut train Services"

"This will cause big problems"

"If this goes ahead it will mean that we will have to sell"

"Please don't allow the reduced train service"

"I really do hope this doesn't happen"

"This is simply a nightmare"

"I think this is a very bad decision and hope this doesn't take place"

"This will affect Farnborough 6th students as well"

"This is so upsetting"

"timetables will need to be increased not reduced"

"This is an absolute disgrace"

"hope it makes them re-think"

"The train service is essential to our family"

"Absolute disgrace"

"These proposed changes are ill considered and will negatively impact all who commute"

"That's disappointing"

"If commuters are forced to use Fleet, where are they likely to park?"

"this would be very frustrating"

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