



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

SWR Timetable Consultation December 2022
South Western Railway
South Bank Central
4th Floor, 30 Stamford Street
London
SE1 9LQ

17 September 2021
Our reference: BS16741

Dear Sir/ Madam,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback to the SWR timetable consultation December 2022. I am responding to this consultation in my role as Member of Parliament for Runnymede and Weybridge. The following comments reflect both my own views and the views and concerns of my constituents.

My primary interest relates to routes affecting the following stations: Addlestone, Chertsey, Egham, Longcross, Virginia Water, Weybridge, which are located within Runnymede and Weybridge. However our train routes are vital for commuting and connecting our communities, and reliability across the whole network is vital if the benefits outlined in the consultation document are to be achieved.

Our local communities are dependent upon a reliable and accessible train network. Our rail network also plays a significant role in our environmental aims to reduce carbon emissions and encourage greater use of public transport. Changes to the network and timetable must reflect local need and ensure co-ordinated transport, with timetables taking account of connection times between branch and mainline routes, and peak travel times, including for school children. Specific concerns relating to connectivity include:

- Connectivity between smaller stations is an issue some residents feel can be overlooked. For example, proposals in the consultation reduce the number of trains stopping at some of the London stations en route to Waterloo, such as Wimbledon and Vauxhall. These areas also support a lot of jobs which rely on the railway for commuting. What assessment has been made of the potential impact of changes to accessibility to work in the greater London area?
- The majority of stations in Runnymede and Weybridge are not located on fast mainline routes to London and rely on connections through Weybridge or Staines for fast access to work. On what basis are connection times between trains on these routes and with fast services to London determined?
- A number of constituents raised concerns over timetable changes which would impact on children attending school in Weybridge being able to get to school on time. I note the consultation states SWR will work with schools and colleges. Where specific local issues such as this are identified, I welcome the commitment of SWR to review local services and seek solutions.
- What steps have SWR taken to engage with other public transport providers, such as

bus companies, to ensure co-ordinated timetabling?

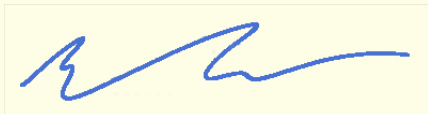
The impact of the pandemic has clearly had a significant impact on rail usage and travel patterns. I welcome the introduction of the new flexible season tickets to reflect this, and recognise the need to reduce capacity on some lines due to fewer passengers commuting to work as regularly. However it is too soon to tell what impact this will have in the longer term. Will SWR agree to keep this under review and, if needed, increase capacity on routes should passenger numbers increase significantly in future?

One area of potential concern is the lack of reference to level crossings in the consultation document and the potential impact of changes to the down time of crossings on local communities. What assessment has there been of the impact on level crossings resulting from these changes? Many towns and villages are affected by level crossing down times which cause considerable delay and disruption. Egham in particular is severely affected and timetable changes can have significant impact locally. This is exacerbated in places such as Addlestone where longer trains mean the level crossing must remain closed until the train leaves the station. Can SWR share detail on the impact of train length and timetable changes on level crossings?

Improvements to the network will only be successful if they are accessible to all. A number of issues continue to arise over accessibility of rail services, and there have unfortunately been a number of instances where, due to lifts being out of order or staff not available, disabled passengers have been unable to access services. I know that SWR and Network rail are working to address this, but would welcome further commitment to ensuring accessibility will be central to any final changes.

As stated above, I welcome measures to improve efficiency, however addressing the practical considerations outlined is vital to ensuring an effective and reliable rail service that meets passenger needs. I look forward to continuing to work closely with SWR on behalf of passengers across Runnymede and Weybridge.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Ben Spencer', written in a cursive style.

Dr Ben Spencer MP
Runnymede and Weybridge