



Department
for Transport

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Mr Ben Clinch

[By email: request-475293-9b514b62@whatdotheyknow.com]

Our Ref: F0015925

2 May 2018

Dear Mr Clinch,

Freedom of Information Act Request – F0015925

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request of 4 April 2018. You requested the following information:

I commute on the Thameslink rail line operated by Govia Thameslink. I am very concerned by the changes to the timetable introduced for May 2018 and its impacts on Harpenden. I presume that the Department has been involved in some way in. Please could you therefore send me, ideally in electronic form, the information or documents below?

- 1. Pedestrian flow modelling at Harpenden which was or may have been used to assess the impact of the revised 2018 timetable***
- 2. Instructions provided by the Department to Thameslink to make additional stops at Luton and Bedford Stations in their revised 2018 timetable***
- 3. Details of the revised TR6 provided by the Department to Govia Thameslink including target passenger demand.***

I am writing to confirm that your request has been considered under the FOI Act 2000. Replies are provided under each of your requests below.

- 1. Pedestrian flow modelling at Harpenden which was or may have been used to assess the impact of the revised 2018 timetable***

The Department for Transport (DfT) does not hold the information you have requested regarding pedestrian flow modelling at Harpenden.

- 2. Instructions provided by the Department to Thameslink to make additional stops at Luton and Bedford Stations in their revised 2018 timetable***

The DfT does not hold the information you have requested regarding instructions to Thameslink to make additional stops at Luton and Bedford stations in their 2018 timetable.

It may be helpful if I explain the background. The £7bn Thameslink Programme will bring a significant capacity increase across the network. During the Thameslink, Southern and Great Northern franchise competition, the DfT specified an increase in services across the network in order to deliver the benefits of the Thameslink Programme, including at Bedford, Luton and Harpenden.

In 2015 Network Rail developed and tested a timetable based on the service requirements specified by the DfT and identified a number of areas in which it was unlikely to work alongside the requirements of other operators. At this time, the DfT asked Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR) to work with other train operators to develop an alternative train service proposal that could deliver the Thameslink Programme improvements without adversely impacting other operators.

The DfT also asked GTR to ensure that its plans on the Midland Main Line would allow space for the additional long distance capacity that will be delivered as part of the Midland Main Line Upgrade Programme. Working with the industry, GTR has developed a timetable that was subject to extensive public consultation during 2016 and 2017. A summary of the timetable consultation results can be found here: <https://www.railplan2020.com/-/media/goahead/railplan2020/gtr-2018-consultation-results-final.pdf?la=en>.

Late in 2017, further detailed timetabling work revealed that East Midlands Trains could not operate its full peak-time service alongside the proposed Thameslink timetable without withdrawing calls at Bedford and Luton.

As a result, DfT requested that GTR recommend options to mitigate the loss of Bedford and Luton stops from East Midlands Trains peak-time services. GTR submitted their recommended option which was to reduce the number of stops on 2 trains per hour such that they stop only at Bedford, Luton and St Albans. The DfT accepted GTR's recommended option. This resulted in fewer services at Harpenden compared to the consultation timetable, but maintained a similar level of peak capacity to that provided today.

When the Midland Main Line Upgrade is completed in 2020, GTR will be able to reinstate the calls it planned to make at Harpenden which DfT expects will result in four additional 12-car fast services from Harpenden to London each morning compared to today.

3. Details of the revised TR6 provided by the Department to Govia Thameslink including target passenger demand.

The DfT does not hold the information that you have requested.

The DfT issued a draft TSR7 last year, which reflected the proposed service level following the completion of the Thameslink Programme. The majority of this change will be delivered in May 2018 with the remaining changes being delivered incrementally between May 2018 and December 2020. It is Network Rail that determines what timetable will actually operate, balancing the requirements of all operators. The final TSR7, incorporating Network Rail's determination, will be finalised and published in due course.

TSR6 is the first stage of this phased timetable change and reflects the May 2018 timetable. The DfT has agreed with GTR that it will issue a replacement TSR6 after Network Rail has finalised the May 2018 timetable. Work to develop the TSR6 will begin shortly and it will be published in due course.

If you are unhappy with the way the DfT has handled your request or with the decisions made in relation to your request you may complain within two calendar months of the date of this letter by writing to the DfT's FOI Advice Team at:

Zone D/04
Ashdown House
Sedlescombe Road North
Hastings
East Sussex TN37 7GA
E-mail: FOI-Advice-Team-DFT@dft.gsi.gov.uk

Please see attached details of DfT's complaints procedure and your right to complain to the Information Commissioner.

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact me. Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

Yours sincerely

Michael Evans
Senior Correspondence Manager- Passenger Services

Your right to complain to DfT and the Information Commissioner

You have the right to complain within two calendar months of the date of this letter about the way in which your request for information was handled and/or about the decision not to disclose all or part of the information requested. In addition a complaint can be made that DfT has not complied with its FOI publication scheme.

Your complaint will be acknowledged and you will be advised of a target date by which to expect a response. Initially your complaint will be re-considered by the official who dealt with your request for information. If, after careful consideration, that official decides that his/her decision was correct, your complaint will automatically be referred to a senior independent official who will conduct a further review. You will be advised of the outcome of your complaint and if a decision is taken to disclose information originally withheld this will be done as soon as possible.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF