



First Capital Connect
Evening Peak Restrictions
Thursday 9 November 2006

Evening Peak Restrictions

Mark Woodbridge
Passenger Focus

‘Free the 13 x 319s!’



- Capacity problems
- Dual voltage route
- Rolling stock designed for Thameslink on lease to Southern until 2009
- Franchise base bid requirements
- Franchise obligations
 - 10,000 additional seats
 - £808m premium payments to government

(photos from delayed FCC 08:44 hours Luton – Kings Cross 25/10/2006)

Background

- April 2006 – FCC take on new franchise
- 23 May – officially informed of restrictions proposal
- 8 June – meeting with FCC
- 12 June – restrictions introduced at 37 stations
- 28 June – review meeting with FCC
- 10 July – restrictions removed from 12 stations
- 8 August – London TravelWatch referral to ORR
- 21 August – ORR response ‘no case to answer’
- 25 October – Parliamentary event
 - 4 MPs and 6 passenger representative groups
- 26 October – Passenger Focus meets with Secretary of State

What does this mean for passengers?

- Cost - Old fares prior to introduction of evening peak restrictions

From	To	CDR	SDR	% increase
Bedford	London	£16.00	£30.30	89
St.Albans	London	£7.90	£14.50	84
Huntingdon	London	£18.10	£28.70	59
Cambridge	London	£17.60	£26.90	53
Hitchin	London	£12.00	£16.20	35

- Passenger confusion

- All passenger focus research points to wanting less complexity with only 37% FCC passengers satisfied with vfm (NPS Spring 2006 results)
- Keeping it simple, commuter markets typically have no restrictions after 09:30 hours
- Goes against Transport Select Committee recommendations (October 2006 report) “How fair are the fares?”the principle of ensuring consistency of restrictions against products across the network
- Perceived restriction of the London tourist market something TfL strongly opposed

First Capital Connect and DfT efforts

- not the first TOC to impose restrictions on commuter routes (ONE 16:59- 18:15 hours)
- joint negotiations with Southern regarding early release of 319 rolling stock
- other rolling stock options
- St Albans ticket carnets – improved flexibility but still not good enough!
- Passenger Focus “Early bird” research, incentivising passengers off the peak and not penalising them

Research Feedback

- the restrictions do not appear to have resulted in any major changes in behaviour – very few respondents have changed the station at which they start their journey and only a small minority have changed their journey times as a result
- around 50% of passengers are aware of the changes
- there are more passengers opposed to the changes than support them – even among commuters, on balance, there is no net support
- trains are perceived to be either *as crowded or more crowded* than in the spring, even among commuters
- therefore there is no evidence that the fare restrictions have helped reduce overcrowding and limited evidence they have affected consumer behaviour.

Next steps

- M.A.D. - not an option in Passenger Focus opinion as it serves nobody well - especially you the passenger
- continue to work with DfT, FCC in finding a long term solution to the capacity issue
- finding a solution would enable FCC to review current restrictions with a view to suspension

Thank you