



# The Brighton mainline Route Utilisation Strategy

Making it work for passengers

A paper by London TravelWatch and  
Passenger Focus



## Executive summary

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This paper is issued by London TravelWatch and Passenger Focus to show how the principles of the Brighton mainline Route Utilisation Strategy (RUS) should be implemented to best serve the interests of passengers. The points raised in this paper should be incorporated in the revised specifications for the franchises which must be issued to give effect to the RUS.

Analysis shows that, despite the controversy which the issue has aroused, those using Gatwick Express are the smallest group of passengers on the route.

This is not to say that the needs of airport passengers should be ignored, but it does show that a sense of proportion must be preserved when assessing their claims in relation to those of other users.

We believe that it is possible to devise a timetable which provides a good service between Victoria and those platforms at Gatwick which are most suited to the needs of air passengers, whilst also obtaining the capacity benefits of combining some of these trains with Sussex coastal services.

This must be complemented by satisfactory arrangements for guiding air passengers to the most appropriate trains and for handling their luggage, and a simplified fares policy which is set lower than the premium fares presently charged by Gatwick Express.

The new arrangements will enable more local trains to be operated to Gatwick, to the benefit of both airport staff and the many passengers who do not start or finish their journeys at Victoria.

For several years the RUS process has cast 'planning blight' over the introduction of improved Metro services in the London area. This has resulted in the perpetuation of an outdated timetable and overcrowding. Now that the RUS is being brought to a conclusion, it is essential that the industry be allowed and encouraged to improve the Metro services – preferably for winter 2006 but certainly no later than summer 2007.

The RUS proposes a significant reduction in the number of trains which call at Clapham Junction. As Clapham Junction is the third busiest station on the Brighton line and one of the most important interchanges in Britain, we consider this would be a mistake. We also believe that a timetable in which all trains call at Clapham Junction would be easier to compile and more robust in operation.

The RUS seems to imply a reduction in local services on the section between Purley and Horley / Gatwick. This is the opposite of what is needed. Again we believe that a timetable based on the RUS principles would actually make it easier than now to improve these services. There are a number of ways this could be achieved, and we recommend that this should be a matter for detailed consultation with the train operators.

Such improvements should be allied with the retention of through services between Tonbridge and London via Redhill, the introduction of all day through services between Reigate and London, and the reinstatement of off peak through trains between Redhill and Brighton.

The Watford – Gatwick service should be retained, and not curtailed at Clapham Junction as proposed in the RUS consultation draft. Surveys show that traffic on this route is increasing rapidly, and conditions at Clapham Junction in the morning peak when these trains do terminate there are now intolerable. We consider that the service should be extended to Milton Keynes, and doubled in frequency to two trains per hour at least between Watford and East Croydon.

However the local service facility which these trains provide south of Gatwick used to be provided by through trains from Victoria, and we consider that the needs of passengers on this section of the route would be better served by reverting to the old arrangement.

We support the retention of through peak trains between Hastings and Victoria via Bexhill.

We also support the Greater Western December 2006 plan to increase the through off peak Reading – Gatwick service to two per hour, and look forward to extension of this service level to the peaks as soon as possible.

In addition, however, we believe that in the forthcoming restructuring of the Virgin CrossCountry, Central Trains and Chiltern franchises, the present skeleton service between Birmingham and Brighton via Oxford should be developed run hourly, with trains running alternately via Guildford and via Kensington Olympia / East Croydon.

We are concerned that the RUS appears to propose a reduction in the existing peak frequencies on the main line through Gatwick, Redhill and East Croydon to Victoria and London Bridge. We could not support any reduction from the existing frequencies.

Current policies for Network Rail's access to the tracks for maintenance have unacceptable consequences for first and last train times and for service frequencies on Sundays. Whilst understandable in the post-Hatfield maintenance and renewals backlog, these arrangements are not in the long-term interests of passengers, and we look to new policies to be in place by 2010.

Whilst we recognise that the aim of the RUS is to secure the best use of the existing infrastructure, this can only be a short term palliative to the present and future growth in demand on the route. Planning must start now for the design and funding of new stations (such as Eastfields to serve Mitcham town centre) and for increased station and track capacity. The most obvious examples of the latter are the construction of new platforms and turnback facilities on the fast lines at Gatwick Airport, and the reconstruction of Clapham Junction and East Croydon stations. We look to the Department for Transport, as the body with overall responsibility for all aspects of railway services in England, to take a lead on these matters immediately.

## Introduction

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This paper is issued by London TravelWatch and Passenger Focus to show how the principles of the Brighton mainline Route Utilisation Strategy (RUS), published by the Department for Transport in February 2006<sup>1</sup>, need to be implemented in order to best serve the interests of passengers. We believe that the issues raised in this paper should be incorporated in the revised specifications for the franchises on the route which must be issued to give effect to the RUS.

The RUS has been subject of extensive consultation since it was issued in draft by the then Strategic Rail Authority (SRA) in 2004. Considerable controversy was aroused by the proposal to integrate the Gatwick Express service with Sussex coastal services, and this tended to overshadow other issues which would affect many more passengers – for good or for ill. Now that the Secretary of State has determined the broad principles on which a new timetable for the route should be constructed, London TravelWatch and Passenger Focus wish to ensure that the vital details – those which go to making a timetable and service specification which provides a good balance between the needs of different groups of passengers – are fully understood and implemented.

London TravelWatch and Passenger Focus have taken into consideration the views of as many of our stakeholders as possible in this paper, including local authorities and user groups.

The headings under which we discuss the issues are as follows:

- Overview
- Main line services – Gatwick Express and Sussex coastal
- Metro services
- Clapham Junction
- Redhill corridor (Purley – Gatwick, Reigate and Tonbridge)
- Watford – Brighton service, and local stations between Three Bridges and Brighton
- Eastbourne – Hastings
- Thameslink
- Reading – Gatwick, and Cross-Country
- Peak services
- Engineering access
- Infrastructure

### Overview

In some important aspects the RUS is short on detail about the services which it envisages should be provided. This is perhaps understandable given that it is a strategic rather than a tactical document. However it includes a number of statements which give cause for concern, as they could mean that too few trains will be operated on key sections of the line – for example that only 14 trains per hour (tph) should be operated south of Purley in the off-peak and only 18 tph in the peaks on a railway which is signalled for 20+ tph on both fast and slow lines.

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<sup>1</sup> Available at [http://www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft\\_railways/documents/page/dft\\_railways\\_611106.pdf](http://www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft_railways/documents/page/dft_railways_611106.pdf)

If such statements are taken literally by Network Rail in compiling the timetable and by ORR in granting revised track access agreements, then the new timetable will fail to satisfy any of the groups of passengers who use the route at present, will reduce journey opportunities and therefore lead to modal shift from rail to road.

This would of course be contrary to the declared policy of government, and of most if not all of the local authorities in the area.

To help understand the needs of different groups of passengers and evaluate the priority which should be given to services to different groups of stations, we attach Appendix 1 which shows the usage of selected individual stations, and Appendix 2 which groups the results in accordance with the geography of the line<sup>2</sup>.

In light of the prominence given to the Gatwick controversy aroused by the RUS, it is salutary to see that of the various service groups, the estimated usage of Gatwick Express (on the most favourable of assumptions regarding the split of traffic between the competing operators) represents the smallest group of passengers on the route.

This is not to say that the needs of airport passengers should be ignored, but it does show that a sense of proportion must be preserved when assessing their claims in relation to those of other users.

It will be important that passengers be informed about the final decisions well in advance and be given a chance to comment on the timetable before it is finalised, in similar manner to the public consultation carried out by 'one' for their recent new West Anglia timetable.

### **Main line services – Gatwick Express and Sussex coastal**

London TravelWatch and Passenger Focus believe that Gatwick is an important market for rail from a number of locations including both Victoria and London Bridge, Clapham Junction and East Croydon, across London via Thameslink and the West London line, the South Coast, Reading, Guildford and also local stations.

The service needs to be the right mixture of fast and local services to attract not only airline passengers, but also staff. We support the Gatwick plan to increase public transport use to Gatwick to 40% of all passengers. However, we would note that although Gatwick generates some 8.6m passengers (appendices 1 & 2) this is only 6.7% of the total use of Brighton Line stations (excluding the branches) and Gatwick Express is used by even fewer passengers.

Therefore, provided the particular needs of air passengers are met, we support the proposal to integrate some Gatwick services with the coastal services in order to secure better use of capacity on the route.

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<sup>2</sup> Data is drawn from national station usage figures published by the SRA in 2004 for the financial year 2002 / 03, and uplifted where appropriate to take account of the under-recording of travelcard etc. usage as described in the SRA's accompanying note to their data.

Much issue has been made of the loss of non-stop services between Victoria and Gatwick. However to make the airport trains share in the task of carrying non-airport passengers – and to allow them to call at stations which many airport passengers would find more convenient than Victoria<sup>3</sup> - would not be novel. This is exactly how Stansted Express is operated, and there is no evidence that this is spurned by airline passengers because it stops at Bishops Stortford, Harlow and Tottenham Hale. The important things for airline passengers are reliability, frequency, and a comfortable seat near and in sight of their luggage.

Since 9/11 the use of Gatwick has changed fundamentally and there are now more point to point domestic and European flight than intercontinental flights, while charter holiday flights have remained about the same<sup>4</sup>. This results in three main types of passengers:

- point to point passengers who travel singly or in small groups and have relatively light luggage
- charter holiday traffic, which tends to be families and who largely travel by car, taxi or coach
- intercontinental travellers from the US, Africa and the Middle East, who tend to travel by train and have large amounts of luggage

It is the last group that London TravelWatch and Passenger Focus had most concerns with in the draft RUS. These intercontinental flights arrive at Gatwick between 07.00 and 10.00 and depart late afternoon. These flows coincide with the commuter peak hours and most of these passengers travel to or from central London with large quantities of luggage. It is vital that the new timetable and service specification takes account of the particular needs of these passengers.

The finalised RUS goes some way towards meeting our concerns about these passengers. The most important point is that it concedes that platforms 1 and 2 at Gatwick are the ones most suited to handling passengers with heavy luggage, and that the timetable should therefore include some trains which start and terminate at Gatwick plus some coastal trains which use these platforms and are allowed additional dwell time<sup>5</sup>.

However we believe that more needs to be done to ensure that the needs of air passengers are met, and the following measures would be needed:

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<sup>3</sup> Particularly Clapham Jct.

<sup>4</sup> Information obtained from meetings with Gatwick Airport management attended by London TravelWatch representatives, and from study of flight schedules.

<sup>5</sup> We would suggest that there should generally be at least 2 tph terminating at Gatwick and another 2 tph coastal trains with dwell time of 4 – 5 mins. All these trains should use platforms 1 and 2. Such a scheme should enable something quite close to the present arrangement whereby there is always a Victoria train in the station and available for boarding.

- class 377 units used on coastal trains to be fitted with at least two large luggage stacks in each car. At the least this modification should be applied to those units to be used on the coastal services using platforms one and two at Gatwick
- ticket gate lines at Gatwick and Victoria to have sufficient wide gates for use by luggage-laden passengers
- staff in Gatwick booking hall to advise / assist luggage-laden passengers to go to platforms one and two
- staff on Victoria gate line to advise / assist luggage-laden passengers to use trains which will arrive at platforms one and two at Gatwick
- a lounge at both stations so that passengers with large quantities of luggage can be advised to wait for a Gatwick starter / terminator and do so in comfort. Passengers travelling in groups should also be recommended to travel in Gatwick starters / terminators if they wish to sit together
- all platforms at Gatwick to have sufficient staff to help passengers board and alight ensure dwell times are minimised
- heavily laden passengers arriving at Victoria and seeking taxis, to be advised of the lifts to the taxi rank above the platforms
- produce high quality leaflets and other forms of passenger information explaining the changes and the new range of services to be provided
- consideration should also be given to the following, provided they can be achieved without significantly compromising the train and line capacity benefits of combining the Sussex coastal and airport services
- reducing the proportion of 3 + 2 seating on Class 377 units, as the gangway width in these areas is exceptionally narrow and difficult to negotiate for passengers with luggage - however light
- scheduling coastal trains which call at platforms one and two at Gatwick to detach / attach a dedicated Gatwick portion<sup>6</sup>

A package which took proper account of all these points would, we believe, provide a realistic and acceptable alternative to the present segregated Gatwick Express service. However it would be misleading to pretend that it would be quite as attractive as the present service. This should therefore be reflected in the fares charged.

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<sup>6</sup> This would re-establish the method of operation used before the separate Gatwick Express service was introduced.

We welcome the RUS proposal that fares between London and Gatwick should be simplified and unified, so as to avoid the confusion caused by the 36 different fares which apply at present. However in recognition of the new and slightly lower level of overall service, we believe that it would be wrong for the new fares to be set as high as the premium fares currently charged by Gatwick Express. They should be nearer the existing Thameslink ticket price.

### **Metro services**

The present South London Metro offers a service in South London similar to that of the Underground in the rest of London. Although generally quite good there are a number of problems that need urgent addressing; these include severe overcrowding in the peaks, different (often lower) levels of service in the peaks to the off peak, and different service patterns and destinations at different times of the day.

Since obtaining the franchise Southern have been able to introduce a number of incremental improvements in the Metro service. The RUS seems to suggest that such improvements should cease, and the present service effectively frozen until a new timetable is introduced for the East London line extension project in 2009. However the shortcomings of the present service are such that this is not an acceptable strategy, and is likely to stifle growth and possibly even drive existing passengers off the Metro services.

It has been a regrettable by product of the RUS process that Southern have felt inhibited from making significant improvements to Metro services for several years. With the RUS is being finalised, it should now be possible for Southern to change the timings of Metro trains in full knowledge of how they would interact with main line services. They should therefore be both allowed and encouraged to make improvements to the Metro services as soon as possible – preferably for winter 2006, but certainly no later than summer 2007.

### **Clapham Junction**

Clapham Junction is not only the third busiest station on the Brighton line, it is one of the most important interchanges in Britain providing interchange between Southern, South Western, Silverlink and local bus services. The numbers of passengers leaving and joining trains at Clapham Junction during outside of the peak is often greater than that at the London terminals. We believe one of the best achievements of the present Southern timetable has been to stop all trains (except two peak hour services) at Clapham Junction and especially the fast Brighton trains.

London TravelWatch has long advocated that the existing Gatwick Express trains should also stop at Clapham Junction to relieve the East Croydon to Clapham Junction section. A timetable which is restructured in accordance with the principles of the RUS will enable this aspiration to be met.

The RUS appears to reduce the number of off-peak trains at Clapham Junction from 9 tph to 6 tph (quite likely running at uneven intervals) and as a consequence will also cut the peak service too. We find this incredible as the section between East Croydon and Clapham Junction is the busiest part of the whole route.

This, along with terminating the Watford Junction services at Clapham Junction, will combine to increase the numbers of passengers having to change trains and make rail a less attractive option.



It will also have an adverse effect on crowding on the London Underground. This is because with all trains calling at Clapham Junction it is easy for passengers whose destination is close to or better served from Waterloo to change at Clapham Junction. Reducing the number of trains which call will result in more passengers going to Victoria and adding to the huge congestion which occurs there on the Underground<sup>7</sup> and local bus services.

The proposal to reduce the number of calls at Clapham Junction by trains on the Brighton main line sits strangely with the recommendation in the draft South West mainline RUS that investment should be made in track, signalling and platform alterations to enable most, possibly all, trains on the latter route to call.

In the peaks, the consequence of not calling all trains at Clapham Junction will be uneven loadings with trains omitting the call being less well loaded than those which do call. This would be inefficient and the opposite of what the RUS is intended to achieve. We would also anticipate a real problem with crowding on platforms as Clapham Junction passengers wait for their trains. This would occur particularly at East Croydon in the morning peak and at Clapham Junction in the evening peak.

London TravelWatch and Passenger Focus are in no doubt that all trains should continue to stop at Clapham Junction in order to properly serve the busiest part of the line. This will also maximise interchange opportunities between the very large range of origins and destinations across London and the south east and south west. It will also make it easier to timetable with all trains stopping, as consistency of calling patterns enables the best use to be made of line capacity.

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<sup>7</sup> It is well known that Victoria LUL station has to be closed to incoming passengers several times during each morning peak because of acute congestion on the platforms and trains.

## **Redhill corridor (Purley – Gatwick, Reigate and Tonbridge)**

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### **Mainline stations**

This corridor, embracing the intermediate stations between Purley and Horley / Gatwick, is the one section of the Brighton line which seems to be neither part of the Metro nor part of the coastal services. As a result of falling in this gap it has had no improvements in service since privatisation. In fact due to uncoordinated decisions between multiple operators it has suffered a reduced service, and some stations have an off-peak service which is no better – in some ways worse – than when the line was electrified 73 years ago.

Yet it is nowadays a busy corridor with more passengers per annum than at Gatwick (Appendix 2). Stations this busy would have at least 6 tph if they were on most other parts of the national network, and if on the London Underground they would have more.

The draft RUS recognised this and suggested that up to 6 tph should serve this corridor in the off-peak. The final RUS appears to reduce this again to its present 4tph with only 2tph at intermediate stations. It does recognise the need for 4 tph at Horley, but provides for only 2tph at Coulsdon South which is a busier station. The RUS acknowledges that Victoria is the preferred off peak destination. This was confirmed by a survey undertaken for London TravelWatch in 2000 at Coulsdon South and Merstham, where over 70% of passengers had a preference for Victoria. Despite this the off peak service was concentrated entirely on London Bridge, and it would appear that this would be perpetuated by a post-RUS timetable.

### **Tonbridge and Reigate**

The RUS also withdraws both the Tonbridge/Tunbridge Wells to London Bridge service and the Tonbridge to Gatwick service, whilst failing to provide a Reigate service. Reigate is the largest conurbation in Surrey without an off-peak through service to London.

Although the withdrawal of the Tonbridge to Gatwick trains has proved controversial with a few stakeholders, in its present form they are simply too slow to provide an effective service for air passengers from Kent, and by terminating at Tonbridge they fail to serve most of the main population centres in the county. On balance, we believe its replacement with a London Bridge to Horsham service will benefit many more passengers and will assist BAA in their aim to increase the proportion of their staff and local air passengers using public transport.

However the proposed withdrawal of the through London Bridge to Tonbridge/Tunbridge Wells service is a different matter, and we believe that this plus the failure to provide an off-peak Reigate service will not encourage modal shift from car to rail but in fact will lead to the opposite.

### **Through service Redhill to Brighton**

London TravelWatch and Passenger Focus support the restoration of through off-peak trains from Redhill to Brighton, a long standing facility which was most recently provided by Thameslink. The draft RUS would have restored the link by extending Reading - Gatwick trains through to Brighton. This was not a sensible proposal as it would have wasted Class 165 rolling stock which would be better used between Reading and Paddington. Resumption of a service by First Capital Connect would be the obvious solution to this requirement.

### Service options

There is a range of possible solutions to the needs of the Redhill corridor and its associated routes. We believe that the basic off peak requirements are for a mix of Victoria and London Bridge services :-

- 2 tph London – Horsham
- 1 tph London – Reigate
- 1 tph London – Tonbridge
- 2 tph semi-fast, of which at least 1 tph should link Redhill with Brighton

Precise calling patterns for the main line stations should be the subject of detailed consultation by the train operators, but the following table provides an indication of the service levels which we consider appropriate.

Station	Existing Service - tph		London TravelWatch Passenger Focus Required Service - tph			Notes
	<i>peak</i>	<i>off-peak</i>	<i>peak</i>	<i>off-peak</i>		
				Preferred	Minimum	
Purley*	4	2	4	2	2	*additional 8 metro tph
Coulsdon South	6	2	6	6	4	
Merstham	4	2	4	4	3	
Redhill	8	4	8	6	6	
Earlswood	4	1	4	2	2	
Salfords	4	1	4	2	2	
Horley	6	2	6	4	3	
All stations should have a minimum of 2tph To Gatwick Airport.						
All stations should have a mixture of London Bridge and Victoria trains in the peak.						
Coulsdon South, Merstham, Redhill and Horley should have a mixture of London Bridge and Victoria trains in the off-peak						

### Watford – Gatwick / Brighton service, and local stations between Three Bridges and Brighton

We believe that the existing Watford to Gatwick / Brighton trains serve three very useful functions

- a local cross London link from south to north and west London, the value of which will increase later in 2006 when the Shepherd’s Bush interchange to the Central line opens
- a south and west London link to the West Coast mainline at Watford without the need to travel via Central London
- a link from the West Coast mainline, north and west London to Croydon and Gatwick Airport

Terminating these services at Clapham Junction, as proposed in the draft RUS, would destroy all these useful links.

The draft RUS based its proposal on passenger figures which a survey by London TravelWatch in 2004 showed were significantly under estimated. A further survey undertaken in early 2006 shows that traffic has risen very substantially, with underlying demand being in the range 20% - 40% higher than 15 months ago<sup>8</sup>.

Heavy overcrowding is now a real problem in the peaks, both on the trains and also on the platform at Clapham Junction in the am peak when the service already terminates there.

We are pleased that the final RUS does not rule out the continuation of these trains running south of Clapham Junction, albeit on the slow lines instead of on the fast lines. London TravelWatch and Passenger Focus consider that operation on the slow lines would have considerable benefit, for example by enabling the trains to call at Balham and thus connect with the Northern line.

We also note that the draft Cross-London RUS proposes that the service should be increased from 1 tph to 2 tph, albeit that the additional train should only operate between Kensington Olympia and Selhurst. London TravelWatch and Passenger Focus strongly welcome the idea of going up to 2 tph, as this is something we have advocated for several years.

However we believe that the specification needs to be broader, with the service operating at least one train per hour from Gatwick – Watford and on to Milton Keynes. The second train should ideally be the same, but if this is not possible then it should at least run between East Croydon<sup>9</sup> and Watford<sup>10</sup>. We also advocate that the present peak calls at Wembley Central should be extended to an all day basis.

An essential point which we must stress is that transfer of these trains from the fast lines to the slow lines south of Clapham Junction must be linked. It would be quite unacceptable for there to be a period during which none of the trains run south of Clapham Junction. So far as the morning peak is concerned, crowding conditions on the platform at Clapham Junction when the present trains terminate are such that we regard reinstatement of these trains southwards as an urgent priority.

A separate issue relates to the service which the Watford trains provide south of Gatwick. With the exception of Balcombe, they provide a local all stations service. They have only done so since Connex diverted a long standing Victoria – Brighton semi-fast train to run to Chichester, and Watford – Gatwick trains were extended to Brighton in lieu. This has never been popular with the local users, partly because the Watford service is more at risk of late running than a London train, but more importantly because the place they actually wish to travel to is Victoria.

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<sup>8</sup> A full report of this survey will be published shortly.

<sup>9</sup> East Croydon is important for two reasons. One is that Croydon is a major traffic objective in its own right. The other is that for passengers wishing to interchange with other Southern services it provides much better facilities in terms of platform layout and step-free interchange.

<sup>10</sup> A 2 tph service to Watford is important because it would ensure acceptable connection times for West Coast mainline (WCML) services, and in the southbound direction would keep the inconvenience of missed connections if a west coast mainline train is late down to a reasonable level.

We believe it is in the interests of these passengers that their through service to Victoria should be reinstated.

### **Eastbourne – Hastings**

Passenger Focus supports the retention of a number of through morning and evening peak services between Hastings/Bexhill and Gatwick / Croydon / Victoria.

### **First Capital Connect**

The RUS does not propose any changes to the existing pattern of First Capital Connect (Thameslink) services. We believe this is wrong in that there is spare capacity on these trains between East Croydon and Gatwick Airport in both the peak and off peak. This could be used to serve intermediate stations such as Coulsdon South, Merstham and Redhill as they did in the past.

### **Reading – Gatwick and CrossCountry**

The draft December 2006 timetable for the new Greater Western franchise provides a welcome increase in the off peak Reading – North Downs line – Gatwick service from 1 tph to 2 tph. We would urge that this frequency be extended to the peaks as soon as possible.

In addition, ever since the Operation Princess plan for an hourly CrossCountry service to Gatwick and Brighton had to be abandoned because of lack of rolling stock, we have sought that this idea be revived. Our proposal is for the present skeleton service between Brighton and Birmingham to be developed to run Brighton – Gatwick Airport – East Croydon – Clapham Junction - West Brompton and / or Olympia – Ealing Broadway – Slough – Reading – Oxford – Birmingham every two hours, with trains running via Guildford on the alternate hours. This is something which we consider should be pursued in connection with the forthcoming restructuring of the Virgin CrossCountry, Central Trains and Chiltern franchises.

Although the present skeleton service is operated by Virgin Voyagers, we would see no objection to a developed service being operated by suitably configured Class 170s or similar rolling stock.

### **Peak services**

Our examination of the issues in connection with making the RUS work for passengers has to some extent concentrated on the off peak. This is because we see this as providing the basis of the service, with the peak requiring additional trains to carry the extra traffic. We do have some concern with what is said in the RUS about the peaks, particularly regarding the number of trains to be operated on the mainline.

The RUS indicates an intention to run only 18 tph on the fast lines in the peaks. We feel this needs some further explanation, as at present there are on average 18 tph between East Croydon and Victoria and another 14 tph between London Bridge and East Croydon. This is made up of the off peak service plus extra London Bridge coastal services and additional semi fast metro services. The RUS proposal would seem to be at first sight to be a reduction.

For example the existing morning peak service on the Redhill corridor increases to provide Horley with 7tph, Redhill with 8 tph, Earlswood, Salfords and Merstham with 4tph and Coulsdon South with 5/6tph and through service from Reigate. There are additional semi-fast services from Caterham, Tattenham Corner and East Grinstead to London Bridge and semi-fast services from Tattenham Corner to Victoria. We would not expect these frequencies to be reduced in a new RUS timetable.

## **Engineering access**

A major issue in recent years has been the question of Network Rail's quest for increased access time for infrastructure maintenance.

We have been concerned that the existing policy of reducing the entire Brighton Line to a two track railway every Sunday has been too restrictive and reduced the level of service at some stations to well below the level of demand. This practice should be reviewed.

We recognise that Network Rail's post-Hatfield drive to deal with the maintenance and renewals backlog has necessarily restricted early morning, late evening and Sunday trains in the short term. However, looking forward to 2017, we regard it as essential that operating hours for metro services within the London travelcard zones should be extended so as to be comparable with those of LUL, i.e. first trains from all origins to arrive at London terminals by 06.00 (07.30 Sun), last trains for all destinations to depart London terminals no earlier than 00.30.

For stations beyond the travelcard zones we have the same objectives, except that last train departures from London no earlier than midnight would be acceptable.

Where major maintenance and renewals cannot be accommodated within the short possessions available outside these hours, longer possessions should be programmed on a planned and recurring basis, preferably limited to Monday to Thursday nights and Sunday mornings, with standardised alternative travel arrangements. Where a longer blockade is planned it is imperative that passengers are given sufficient advance notice so that they can make alternative arrangements well in advance.

London TravelWatch and Passenger Focus believe these policies should be implemented no later than 2010.

## **Infrastructure**

This paper has concentrated on the issue of a new timetable for the Brighton line within the constraints of the existing infrastructure, because this is the focus of the RUS.

However we are firmly of the view that this can only be a short term palliative to the present and future growth in demand on the route. We believe that planning must start now for the design and funding of new stations (such as Eastfields to serve Mitcham town centre) and for increased station and track capacity. The most obvious examples of the latter are the construction of new platforms and turnback facilities on the fast lines at Gatwick Airport, and the reconstruction of Clapham Junction and East Croydon stations.

We look to the Department for Transport, as the body with overall responsibility for all aspects of railway services in England, to take a lead on these matters immediately.

London TravelWatch and Passenger Focus will be pleased to discuss this paper with the appropriate industry parties.

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Appendix 1								
Station	UK "league table" position	Brighton line position	Usage 2002/3	25%TravelCard usage uplift	Standard Mainline Off-peak Trains to London			Other trains
	By usage	By usage			Present	RUS	LTW / PF	
London Bridge	1	1	80,773,753		9	9	9	*
London Victoria	3	2	61,647,757		14	12	14	*
Clapham Junction	10	3	17,122,208		9	6	10	*
East Croydon	13	4	13,614,543	17,018,179	18	17	19	*
Brighton	19	5	10,368,208		5	4	5 or 4	\$
Gatwick Airport	21	6	8,641,336		13	12	13 or 12	\$
Haywards Heath	58	7	3,448,590		7	8	9 or 8	
Redhill	72	8	2,917,667		4	4	6	\$
Norwood Junction	120	9	2,015,885	2,519,856	2	2	2	*
Three Bridges	128	10	1,952,804		7	8	9 or 8	
Purley	140	11	1,834,625	2,293,281	2	2	2	*
Burgess Hill	224	12	1,254,201		3	4 or 3	4 or 3	
Hassocks	340	13	825,315		4	4 or 3	6 or 4	
Coulsdon South	357	14	810,233	1,012,791	2	2	4	
Horley	363	15	773,900		2	4	4	
Merstham	539	16	467,535		2	2	4 ,	
Wivelsfield	586	17	412,833		3	4 or 3	4 or 3	
Preston Park	829	18	248,245			4 or 3	4 or 3	
Earlswood Surrey	951	19	200,276		1	2 or 1	2	
Balcombe	1360	20	89,672		1	2 or 1	2	
Salfords	1468	21	73,957		1	2 or 1	2	
<b>Total</b>			<b>128,719,790</b>					* also Metro
NB. excludes all Branches								\$ other trains
Kensington Olympia	339	N/A	752,103	940,129	1	0	2	\$
West Brompton	1237	N/A	131,414	164,268	1	0	2	\$
Reigate	404	N/A	686180		0	0	2 or 1	\$

Appendix 2								
Total usage north of Gatwick excluding London Terminals					Usage South of Gatwick excludes Brighton			
	UK pos	Brighton P	SRA 2002/3	Travelcard+25%		UK pos	Brighton P	SRA 2002/3
Kensington Olympia	339	*	762,103	952,629	Three Bridges	128	10	1,952,804
West Brompton	1237	*	131,414	164,268	Haywards Heath	58	7	3,448,590
Clapham Junction	10	3	17,122,208	21,402,760	Wivelsfield	586	17	412,833
East Croydon	13	4	13,614,543	17,018,179	Balcombe	1360	20	89,672
Norwood Junction	120	9	2,015,885	2,519,856	Burgess Hill	224	12	1,254,201
Purley	140	11	1,834,625	2,293,281	Hassocks	340	13	825,315
Coulsdon South	357	14	810,233	1,012,791	Preston Park	829	18	248,245
Merstham	539	16	467,535	467,535	<b>Total</b>			<b>8,231,660</b>
Redhill	72	8	2,917,667	2,917,667				
Earlswood Surrey	951	19	200,276	200,276	Brighton	19	5	10,368,208
Salfords	1468	21	73,957	73,957	<b>Total</b>			<b>18,599,868</b>
Horley	363	15	773,900	773,900				
<b>Total</b>			<b>40,724,346</b>	<b>49,797,099</b>				
					<b>Gatwick Airport</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8,641,336</b>
<b>Total usage Redhill corridor (Gatwick and East Croydon)</b>				NB. Excludes all branches	<b>Gatwick Express</b>	<i>Estimate</i>		<i>6,000,000</i>
Purley	140	11	1,834,625	2,293,281				
Coulsdon South	357	14	810,233	1,012,791				
Merstham	539	16	467,535	467,535				
Redhill	72	8	2,917,667	2,917,667				
Earlswood Surrey	951	19	200,276	200,276				
Salfords	1468	21	73,957	73,957				
Horley	363	15	773,900	773,900	Reigate	404		686180
<b>Total</b>			<b>7,078,193</b>	<b>7,739,408</b>				
<b>Usage north of Croydon</b>				0				
Kensington Olympia	339		762,103	952,629				
West Brompton	1237		131,414	164,268				
Norwood Junction	120	9	2,015,885	2,519,856				
<b>Total</b>			<b>2,909,402</b>	<b>3,636,753</b>				
<b>Total all stations excluding EC &amp; CJ</b>			<b>9,987,595</b>	<b>11,376,160</b>				



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