



c2c's timetable consultation
Passenger Focus report
August 2006

c2c's timetable consultation 16 March 2006 – 14 April 2006

Introduction

Passengers were recently consulted on c2c's plans to make changes to the December 2006 timetable and this paper provides a summary of the consultation process and resulting changes. The current timetable has not materially changed for a number of years and Passenger Focus wanted passengers to be given the opportunity to give their views and c2c the chance to use passenger feedback to improve the timetable.

Consultation process and partnership

Passenger Focus has been working in partnership with c2c for the last 14 months to ensure that passengers have a say about changes to their timetable and to develop a process for consulting them. The draft timetable was developed by c2c and made available on its website. To draw attention to the draft timetable, Passenger Focus and London TravelWatch held a series of lively station events distributing over 15,000 '*Your train times are changing*' leaflets to passengers across the c2c route in March 2006. Leaflets were also placed on seats for all evening peak trains starting from London Fenchurch Street station. The consultation was publicised on the Passenger Focus website and Passenger Focus issued a press release highlighting the consultation. An article was also included in c2c's magazine which was sent out to all season ticket holders.

Passengers were advised to view the draft timetable published on c2c's website. There was a statement summarising the headline changes. Passengers were then invited to complete the online feedback form.

Consultation results

The consultation took place over a four week period from 16 March to 14 April 2006. A total of 1835 responses were received via c2c's website and 70 responses in emails and letters. Responses were also received from Rail User Groups (RUGs) and Local Authorities.

The breakdown of the issues received are as follows:

- 543 concerns about the changes proposed at Laindon (see "Laindon Issue" below)
- 297 requesting more train stops at West Ham and Limehouse station during peak-time (morning and evening)
- 152 requests for more 12 car trains in the afternoon peak around 17:00/17:30 for mainline trains
- 35 concerns about Ockendon services
- 808 individual matters.

The single biggest concern was the change to Laindon services.

Laindon issue

The main concerns of Laindon passengers can be summarised as follows:

1. the loss of Laindon starter trains and consequent impact on seat availability for Laindon passengers in the morning peak
2. the loss of direct peak trains from Laindon stopping at West Ham and Limehouse

3. the loss of trains terminating at Laindon and consequent impact on seat availability for Laindon passengers in the evening peak.

Changes following passenger feedback

As a result of the feedback from passengers, Rail Users Groups (RUGs), and the intervention of MPs and Passenger Focus, c2c reviewed the original draft timetable proposals and have made the changes to the original draft timetable outlined below. These improvements go some way to address concerns raised by Laindon passengers but also other passengers on the route.

Additional Limehouse calls

In the timetable produced for public consultation it was highlighted that very few of the London Fenchurch Street to Shoeburyness peak trains had stops at Limehouse. Stops have now been added to about half of these trains.

(Shoeburyness to London Fenchurch Street) – 06:00, 06:20, 06:40, 07:00, 07:20 and 08:05

(London Fenchurch Street to Shoeburyness) – 16:29, 16:59, 17:20, 17:40, 17:59, 18:20 and 18:40

Additional West Ham calls

- For the Rainham route, additional stops have been included to ensure there are similar stopping patterns at West Ham during the morning and evening peak
- West Ham calls added to 50% of evening Grays trains at a 20 minute interval
- Increase of journey opportunities between Basildon and Laindon and West Ham
- Additional calls added to Southend/Shoeburyness trains to provide a 20 minute interval service.

Re-instatement of Laindon services to West Ham and Limehouse

Special mention must be made of the Limehouse and West Ham connections which were to be lost to Laindon passengers in the original draft but have been reinstated in the following services –

Laindon to Limehouse departures:

- 06:52, 07:06, 07:12, 07:26, 07:32, 07:46, 07:52, 08:06, 08:26, 08:37

Laindon to West Ham departures:

- 06:52, 07:06, 07:26, 07:46, 08:06, 08:26

Additional Pitsea call

It was noted that there was a large connection gap from the Southend line into Tilbury Loop services at Pitsea (the 08:05 connected into the 08:23 via Tilbury) consequently an additional stop has been put in the 07:50 from Shoeburyness – arriving Pitsea at 08.15.

Redistribution of 12 car trains in the evening peak

Following comments relating to the afternoon peak trains departing London Fenchurch Street after 17:00 it was decided that the original plan for the 12 car trains to be on the 17:30, 17:35, 17:40 and 17:50 services did not provide enough capacity, which resulted in moving carriages from the 17:40 train to the 17:20 departure.

Move of Shoeburyness starter to Thorpe Bay

Due to the platform capacity constraints at Shoeburyness the 07:15 departure has been altered to start at Thorpe Bay at 07:18. It was noted that there were less Thorpe Bay starter trains in the new timetable compared with the current. This should also mean that there is more free capacity on the train now.

Creation of additional Laindon starter/terminator trains

Additional trains created to meet the Laindon passenger needs:

- 16:50 London Fenchurch Street to Laindon (stopping at all stations)
- 08:32 Laindon to London Fenchurch Street (stopping at all stations)

Increase in carriages

The number of carriages on 07:48 Southend Central to London Fenchurch Street has been increased from eight to 12.

Improvement of connections from branches

Alterations have also been made to the timetable to allow better connections from the Tilbury Loop into the mainline at Pitsea for Southend bound travellers and from the Ockendon Line into the London bound mainline at Upminster.

Early birds

Passenger Focus noted that the connection time between the first train from Stanford le Hope (04:31) with the 04:20 train from Shoeburyness at Upminster was only one minute in the new timetable. This was insufficient time for passengers to make the connection. Therefore c2c has agreed to rectify this and provide at least a three minute connection time.

Station facilities

In addition to the above, c2c has agreed to look into improving facilities at Laindon to help passengers in finding seats across the full length of the trains once the new timetable starts in December 2006. Passenger Focus will be working to oversee the developments with c2c to see whether additional platform shelter and improved signage can be provided.

Passenger panel

One thing that became apparent as a result of this consultation process is that there are RUGs representing passengers' interests on only some sections of the c2c route. Where there are mutually exclusive aspirations, passengers without a RUG may lose out (as was the case for Laindon passengers). c2c has therefore agreed to work with Passenger Focus to establish a Passenger Panel in 2006. The aim of the Panel will be to ensure better and fairer representation for all passengers along the route.

West Ham re-signalling

c2c will also be pushing Network Rail to fund work to improve signalling at West Ham station.

Other Issues

All changes to timetables require a balancing of a limited number of trains, drivers and train paths versus passengers' expectations for seats, faster and more frequent trains, in addition to opportunities to connect with interchanging stations such as West Ham.

It is hoped that the vast majority of passengers will welcome the new timetable. However Passenger Focus has secured commitment from c2c to monitor the timetable once it becomes operational in December 2006 and where possible to make tweaks to correct any obvious problems.

Passenger Focus will expect c2c to monitor how passengers adjust to the new timetable and the spread of seating capacity along the route, particularly as it affects passengers from Laindon. If the additional seating capacity provided is not being used then we would expect c2c to revisit the train allocation in both the morning and evening peaks.

Passengers main concerns are that the new timetable should provide a similar if not improved level of punctual and reliable services. Whilst the increase in the number of West Ham stops is welcome we are aware that this might be a risk for performance owing to the constraints of the existing signalling system.

Conclusion

The consultation has given passengers a real opportunity to raise issues and concerns and influence c2c in its development of the proposed timetable starting in December 2006. c2c has responded to the concerns of passengers making changes where possible and provided explanations why other changes could not be accommodated. The timetable in December will be much improved as a result of the consultation.

Finally, all issues which have not been considered or resolved at this consultation will be taken up with c2c in future discussions. These include - the possibility of a fast 19:00 train on the mainline route; improved connections between Grays and Southend; and an additional starter train from Laindon arriving London Fenchurch Street before 9:00 a.m. Passenger Focus would also like to see improvements to West Ham signalling, in order to increase the number of trains that can stop there without affecting performance sooner rather than later. These are all issues that Passenger Focus will develop with c2c to continuously improve the quality of service to passengers on an on-going basis.

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