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23 November 2007

Dear Gavin,

Re: Invitation to comment on CrossCountry December 2008 Timetable Proposals

Passenger Focus representatives recently attended both your afternoon and evening stakeholder briefing sessions in Edinburgh, Birmingham, Manchester, Exeter, Peterborough, Reading and York regarding your plans for the franchise and proposals for the December 2008 timetable. Thank you for the efforts to publicise your plans, and for encouraging stakeholders and passenger representatives to send you their comments and practical suggestions.

We have studied your "Changing Times" consultation paper and the draft December 2008 timetables you made available to statutory stakeholders. We have received copies of Rail User Groups' submissions about the topic (see Appendix 2) and we have discussed the changes with other interested parties.

We are pleased that recommendations we made on behalf of passengers in our response<sup>1</sup> to the Department for Transport (DfT) proposals for the new Cross Country franchise have been addressed in the proposals. We welcome CrossCountry's plans, in particular:

- offering more seats for passengers, particularly on weekdays across Birmingham
- improving journey times on the Newcastle to Reading service as faster journeys are a significant factor when people choose to travel by rail
- retaining some through services in addition to the DfT's specification such as Edinburgh to Reading
- providing more services for Stansted Airport, and between Cardiff and Nottingham
- providing a new daily commuter service from Bristol to Plymouth
- improving Summer weekend services.

We hope that aspirations for better links, such as those for Chepstow (see section 7) can be considered and addressed in the near future.

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<sup>1</sup> Passenger Focus, 7 August 2006.

We encourage CrossCountry to recognise Passenger Focus policy regarding service patterns, connections and journey times:

- services should be planned to meet passenger needs. Operational expediency, revenue maximization, historic timetables and historic engineering work patterns should not be the prime factors in determining public service provision
- ensure stations continue to be served adequately, with, as a minimum, the maintenance of their current service levels
- delay should be thought of in terms of delay to passengers, not delay to trains. Timetables should be robust, and connections held where appropriate in order not to exacerbate delay to passengers
- the decision to hold a connection, or otherwise, must take into account the service frequency. Connections should be guaranteed for the 'last train of the day'
- the number of services disrupted by engineering possessions should be reduced; when passengers do suffer disruption and longer journey times they should be automatically compensated.

We are aware of the difficulties the planners have in creating the best possible timetable, and the constraints within which they have to plan. However, Passenger Focus would like to highlight our main concerns with your proposals which are detailed below:

### **Headline Issues**

- the proposed service between Manchester and Birmingham
- journey information and customer care for passengers who have to change trains
- retention of the present coverage of cheaper advance purchase fare products for long distance journeys
- confirmation of which services will be formed of HSTs or two Voyagers
- the impact for many passengers of major timetable alterations in consecutive years
- the need to alleviate the negative effects for passengers caused by the cessation of through trains to the NW of England and Scotland via the WCML
- the future development of the timetable.

We offer the following observations<sup>2</sup>:

1. The proposed service between Manchester and Birmingham compares very unfavourably with all other parts of the core routes<sup>3</sup> where journey times, frequencies and overall pattern of the timetable are generally consistent with the current timetable. Passengers on these routes will appreciate the continuity. However, the Manchester route will be almost completely altered, with a very different service pattern, reducing the attractiveness of the service by making its timetable non-standard; some considerably longer journey times; reduced frequencies and connectivity. "Sufficient train services" ranked second in our recent study of passengers' priorities<sup>4</sup>. It will be very difficult for many passengers to understand how the proposed timetable is better than the current one.

*Example<sup>5</sup> 1.1:* Departures from Manchester are now xx.24 and xx.54, the proposed times will be xx.08 and xx.28; from Birmingham, now at xx.18 and xx.48, departures will move to xx.31 and xx.56.

*Example 1.2:* The xx.56<sup>6</sup> departures from Birmingham will be 16 minutes slower than now, an average speed to Manchester of only 46 mph, which is not competitive.

*Example 1.3:* only hourly from Stockport and Macclesfield, with a reduced range of through journey opportunities.

*Example 1.4:* Congleton will lose all but two inter-regional trains.

2. We remain concerned about connections and their effect on journey times. In our recent research<sup>7</sup> passengers expressed a preference for through journeys with 14% of all passengers surveyed 'fairly unlikely' or 'very unlikely' to complete the same stretch of journey again by train, if they were required to make a change. Many CrossCountry journeys will still be possible without changing between CrossCountry trains but the recasting of the timetable reduces such opportunities, especially outside the core of the network i.e. Reading/Bristol to Birmingham and Newcastle/Manchester to Birmingham.

Our research also showed that 92% of passengers overall would be 'very' or 'fairly concerned' at being able to make a connection on time. This figure was even higher for business travellers, where time delays are of increased importance. The Spring 2007 National Passenger Survey (NPS) found that Virgin CrossCountry achieved only 74% passenger satisfaction for "connections with other train services".

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<sup>2</sup> A more detailed summary of issues by route is provided in appendix 4.

<sup>3</sup> Reading/Bristol to Birmingham and Newcastle to Birmingham.

<sup>4</sup> Passengers' priorities for improvements in rail services, July 2007.

<sup>5</sup> Examples are given on a selective, not comprehensive, basis.

<sup>6</sup> These trains are normally from Bournemouth, their journey times to Manchester will be 24 minutes longer than now.

<sup>7</sup> Passenger Focus response to the DfT's proposals for the new Cross Country franchise, August 2006.

On routes served only hourly, such as Bournemouth to Birmingham, or on Sunday mornings when most routes will run only hourly, convenient connections are of prime importance to passengers. However, on Saturdays and Sunday mornings some connections at Birmingham are inside the twelve minute allowance that distribution systems obey for New Street station. Passengers will therefore face very protracted waits. Research<sup>8</sup> shows that passengers typically state their ideal waiting time at main interchanges is between 14 and 34 minutes. 79% of the passengers interviewed during a survey<sup>9</sup> of passengers' needs at interchanges gave a time within that range as 'acceptable'.

*Example 2.1:* Saturdays. Bournemouth dep. 9.46, Birmingham arr. 12.49. The next connection towards Leeds, Edinburgh, meeting the 12 minute rule will not be until 14.00.

*Example 2.2:* Sundays. Bristol dep. 9.28, Birmingham arr. 10.56. The next possible connection for Manchester will be 11.56. However southbound connections will be good: Manchester dep. 8.28, Birmingham arr. 9.58, connection at 10.12 for stations to Plymouth.

*Example 2.3:* Sundays. Leeds dep. 8.10, Birmingham arr. 10.06, with the next train to Reading and Bournemouth not until 11.03.

We consider the requirements of interchanging passengers in more detail in section 6.

3. Many passengers will face changing between different train operating companies to complete a journey after this December and are asking about the range of fares that will be available and how they will access them. Cheaper advance purchase fares from many stations that link with CrossCountry services are currently available. Passengers are unsure whether the existing range of products will continue throughout the lifetime of the franchise.

*Example 3.1:* NFM 97 shows "value advance" fares from St. Ives to Windermere. Such a fare exemplifies passengers' concerns, as it requires at least two changes and uses trains that currently provide a service without the need to change in Birmingham.

4. The additional capacity that has been included in the new franchise has not yet been specifically identified i.e. passengers are still waiting for confirmation of which trains will be formed by HSTs or two Voyager sets. There are some route segments where the additional number of seats planned is low (between Reading and Leamington 16.00–18.30 only 86 more seats are proposed) but overcrowding is already at uncomfortable levels.

The services transferred from Central Trains will be operated by a mixture of two and three-car Class 170 trains. Despite the best efforts of those

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<sup>8</sup> Barriers to Interchange, RPC NW England, February 2005.

<sup>9</sup> A Review of Virgin Trains Interchange Plans, RPC, April 2002.

concerned with day-to-day operation to match capacity with demand, mismatches are inevitable, and a standard fleet of three-car trains would be the passengers' choice. The addition of first class seats also reduces the number of standard class seats available. The introduction of first class on TransPennine Express north west routes has added to the overcrowding that standard class passengers experience.

5. The December 2008 timetable will be another major recast of the timetables only a year after the significant alterations of December 2007. Passengers will find the basic two-hourly network of through trains offered in this December's timetable attractive, only to discover that the network is dismantled a year later. Following the reduction of through services and worsening of journey times for passengers travelling between the South West, South Coast/Thames Valley and stations Crewe to Glasgow this December, the December 2008 timetable will further reduce through journey opportunities.

*Example 5.1:*

Dec. 2007 (two-hourly)	Dec.2008
Bournemouth to Edinburgh via the EC	to be withdrawn
Bournemouth to Manchester	to be hourly
Reading to Manchester	to be withdrawn
Reading (or south thereof) to Birmingham	to be hourly, to Newcastle
Plymouth to Edinburgh via the EC	to be hourly
Plymouth to Manchester	to be withdrawn
(hourly)	
Bristol to Newcastle	to be withdrawn

Note: this table summaries end to end links; as stated in section 1 on page 3 service patterns over the core routes, except Manchester to Birmingham, are unaltered.

Many passengers travelling on the CrossCountry network, including those on the core routes, will find the ultimate destination of their train changes in December this year and again in December next year. Passengers remember where the train they caught last time was travelling to, and will try to identify the train they want using this familiar method in future, only to find services have changed resulting in confusion.

*Example 5.2:* Comparing the current timetable with this December, the destinations of 40% of CrossCountry trains from Plymouth will alter. Comparing 2007 with 2008, the destination of 57% of trains will alter.

6. Changing trains must be as easy and convenient as possible. Passengers differ in their requirements and needs. A person with reduced mobility has different needs compared to a person travelling alone on business, or a family group travelling on holiday with several suitcases. Similarly the needs of regular passengers are not the same as those of people travelling for the first time on a route.

Interchange between some routes can be made at more than one station and considering the different needs of passengers, not all will find the same station appropriate. The selection of the right interchange is further complicated as what applies in one direction might not apply in the other.

*Example 6.1:* Passengers from south of Reading wishing to travel towards Newcastle can change at Reading, and join trains at their origin. This provides the advantage of more time to join the train and get settled which may be particularly appealing for the older passenger, or groups travelling together. Passengers travelling in the opposite direction will not have the choice of changing onto a train at its origin.

Passengers Focus has extensively researched passenger requirements when changing trains, and has built up considerable knowledge in this area (see Appendix 3). Based on this evidence we have attempted to create an 'interchange matrix' which could be used to guide passengers to the most appropriate interchange station for their needs (see Appendix 1). A simplified paper version of this interchange guide could be made available to passengers and staff. Such information would be an important step in the promotion of alternatives to Birmingham New Street station. The factors considered in the interchange matrix could be used to develop an algorithm to control an electronic guide. Particular passenger requirements could be fed into CrossCountry systems and the best interchange option would be offered. Because of the range of interchange stations, CrossCountry's distribution systems would need to be flexible enough to permit individual selection too.

*Example 6.2:* Regular passenger between Taunton and Wolverhampton, travelling alone, with few additional requirements such as the need for assistance in joining a train, or for finding the correct platform: any interchange station would be suitable.

*Example 6.3:* Family group, infrequent travellers, several large suitcases, making their first trip from Derby to Bournemouth: Leamington Spa would offer same-platform interchange.

Interchange with other train companies should also be improved. In addition, best endeavours should be made to maintain existing connections.

*Example 6.4:* Nuneaton at present offers good connections eastwards out of West Coast trains onto Stansted-bound trains (typically xx.34/xx.53), and achievable connections in the reverse direction (typically xx.13/xx.19-22).

We note that CrossCountry is unique in not being SFO of any station at which it calls. However, there is a need to ensure that staff at stations are focused on helping all passengers. Without sufficient and focused information and advice passengers are unlikely to make repeat journeys.

7. A feature of Cross Country timetables for many years is the way they have been adjusted to reflect emerging demand. Population growth as well as increasing demand for travel over particular routes will continue to create demand for new or altered services. We hope it will be possible for CrossCountry to adopt proposals that are shown to be in the interests of passengers.

*Example 7.1:* Many groups are concerned about the proposed provision of train services on the West Midlands to Manchester route. Passengers and stakeholders at Stone and Congleton believe they should have better services

than those proposed. London Midland is reported<sup>10</sup> as interested in extending their Euston to Crewe regional service to Liverpool. This would open the possibility of recasting the Birmingham to Manchester timetable to accommodate the aspirations that have been expressed.

*Example 7.2:* The campaign for CrossCountry trains to stop at Chepstow by BT4C (Better Trains For Chepstow), is gathering support from Welsh Assembly Members and local government.

*Example 7.3:* The service pattern between Nottingham and Derby that is planned for December 2008 results in a far from optimal timetable, with a non-standard pattern for important intermediate stops such as Beeston.

8. We would welcome reassurance that train turnaround times will not be so rapid that train preparation is compromised. Adequate cleaning, provisioning, fault rectification and seat labelling, must not be sacrificed. These are all important aspects of the journey experience and affect "Value for money" ratings given by passengers. Value for money only scored 53% "satisfied or good" for Virgin Cross Country<sup>11</sup>.

We hope that CrossCountry working together with other Train Operating Companies, Network Rail and the DfT can address the concerns we have raised on behalf of passengers. We look forward to reviewing with you the comments you receive during this consultation period, and discussing the detail of any changes or adaptations to the proposed December 2008 CrossCountry timetables which result from practical suggestions you receive.

If you have any queries about the content of this letter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



Susan Tibbett

Passenger Link Manager

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<sup>10</sup> Transit no. 323, November 2, 2007.

<sup>11</sup> NPS, Spring 2007.

Appendix 1: **Interchange matrix** (n.b. not completely populated)

<b>Northbound</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
station	lift	buffet	lavatories	enclosed waiting room	starting point of train	same platform	NPS score	"ambiance"	total score	passenger type	final score
Reading	10	7.5	7.5	10	10	5	6.8		61.8		
Oxford	10				0	7.5			27.5		
Banbury	10	5	10	10	0	10			55		
Leamington Spa	10	10	10	10	0	10	6.1		66.1		
Taunton		10	10	10	0	7.5	8.8		53.8		
Bristol TM	10	7.5	7.5	10	5	5	7.3		57.3		
Bristol Parkway		0	0	10	0	10	5.5		35.5		
Cheltenham Spa					0	10	5.4		25.4		
Birmingham New Street	7.5	5	5	7.5	0	5	5.1				
Wolverhampton	10	7.5	10	10	0	5	4.7		52.2		
Derby	5	7.5	7.5	7.5	0	5	5.5		43		
Sheffield	10	10	10	10	0		7.6		52.6		
York					0		8.5		13.5		
Darlington					0	10			20		
Durham					0	10			20		
Newcastle					0		7.2		12.2		

**Explanation of scores:**

Columns 1 - 6: 0 = not true; 5 = available, but not at platform level; 7.5 = not on all platforms; 10 = available on all platforms  
 Column 7: the latest NPS score expressed as a decimal, multiplied by 10. NB 1 added for improving, subtracted for worsening, station  
 Column 8: 0 = very poor, 10 = excellent  
 Column 10: a variable, used to modify column 9's value to reflect the differing requirements of passengers

## Appendix 2: **Submissions received from other groups**

Better Trains For Chepstow  
N. Bleicher  
Railfuture (West Midlands)  
South East Northumberland Rail User Group  
South Oxfordshire District Council  
TravelWatch East Midlands  
Merseytravel  
Stockport Council

## **Timetable consultation events attended by Passenger Focus representatives**

Edinburgh      Monday 1/10/07      evening session  
  
Reading          Wednesday 03/10/07  
  
Peterborough    Thursday 04/10/07  
  
York              Thursday 04/10/07    both sessions  
  
Manchester      Tuesday 09/10/07  
  
Birmingham    Tuesday 09/10/07    both sessions  
  
Exeter            Wednesday 10/10/07 both sessions

## Appendix 3: **Bibliography of relevant research into passengers' requirements at interchanges**

A review of Virgin Trains Interchange Plans, RPC, April 2002  
A Further Review of Virgin Trains Interchange Plans, RPC, April 2004  
Barriers to Interchange, RPC NW England, February, 2005  
Passenger Focus responses to the DfT's proposals for the new Cross Country and the East Midlands franchises, August 2006  
Passenger Focus response to Network Rail's Scotland RUS draft consultation, November 2006  
Changing trains – what will New Cross Country passengers need? Passenger Focus, April 2007

## Appendix 4: Detailed Commentary on Proposed Timetables for December 2008

Strategic issues arising from the December 2008 timetable (as at 23/10/07)

### The major issues for passengers will be:

- A second major recast of the timetables only a year after this December's major alterations
- No clear strategy to create for passengers "the best of all possible interchanges", to match experience with expectations
- Massive changes on the Birmingham to Manchester route
- Removal of most of the two-hourly through services on routes between the South Coast and the Thames Valley and the North East and Scotland
- Removal of most of the new two-hourly through trains between Plymouth and Manchester

Passengers will be subjected to two considerable changes to established services. The "final" timetable issued by Virgin CrossCountry offers a reasonable spread of through services to destinations. Some of the routes, such as Plymouth to Manchester, could well prove popular, only to disappear after a year. However, the regular through services are, of course, only on the routes remaining with CrossCountry.

### Changing at New Street:

The trains on the route from Birmingham to Scotland via the NW of England will be at xx.03 minutes past each hour from this December. As a consequence connections out of the trains at xx.25 from Plymouth offer either a 7 minute connection (xx.56/x1.03) – not recognised by industry systems and only for the fit on trains that are on time - or 67 minutes (xx.57/x2.03). Most such journeys will be an hour longer.

Connections between trains from Bournemouth and the NW and Scotland will be xx.45/x1.03 this December, increasing to xx.49/x1.20 from next December. From December 2008, retiming of the northbound departures to xx.20 from Birmingham will remove the hour's extra journey time.

Southbound connections at Birmingham from this December will be xx.06 or xx.11<sup>12</sup>/x1.12 for most Plymouth connections. From December '08 they will be xx.50/x1.13. Connections for Bournemouth trains will be disrupted in the same way; from this December they will be around 50 minutes, from December 2008 they will be, typically, 14 minutes (xx.50/x1.04).

The alterations planned for new CrossCountry are described by region or line of route and refer to the Monday to Friday timetable. Only routes inherited from Virgin XC are described here.

### 1. West of England

In brief:

- many times unaltered;
- some slots in Cornwall swapped over,
- peak services at Bristol unchanged,

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<sup>12</sup> The 10.10 from Glasgow is due at 14.41.

- some “adjustments” to Plymouth/Paignton slots.

Issues:

- Capacity: could there be a problem with the reduction in number of westbound Plymouth trains?
- potentially, the swapping of slots in Cornwall, for example the hour earlier first train.
- The withdrawal of the 16.15 from Paignton: that removes a day return facility.
- It might not be possible for HSTs to be diagrammed on all trains needing extra capacity – no details until after Feb. '08 timetable conference<sup>13</sup>

The basic pattern and times of the timetable: unchanged – hourly to/from Plymouth, with extensions for Cornwall and Paignton.

First trains: most are as now, exceptions:

- new 6.34 from Bristol TM to Plymouth,
- 7.30 from Penzance moves to 6.28.
- First “one change” connection from Glasgow via the WCML due Plymouth 13.49 (earlier than now).

Last trains: most are as now, exceptions:

- new 20.12 from Paignton to Birmingham,
- 20.55 from Penzance to Plymouth moves to 21.20.
- Last “one change” connection to Scotland via the WCML will be the 15.25 from Plymouth (same time as current last through train).

Withdrawn trains:

- 6.40 from Plymouth,
- 16.15 from Paignton.
- 13.11 from Bristol to Paignton, due 15.05.
- 15.11 from Bristol to Plymouth, due 17.15.
- 17.55 from Plymouth to Penzance withdrawn (extension of a train from Dundee).

Other changes:

- 9.30 from Penzance moves to 9.48.
- New 6.56 from Paignton, from Newton Abbot takes the up times of the current 6.40 from Plymouth.
- 17.11 from Bristol will run to Paignton, stops at Totnes and Plymouth withdrawn.
- New 20.47 from Plymouth to Penzance (extension of a train from Edinburgh).

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<sup>13</sup> David Judson, Arriva, 9/10/07.

- New 21.11 from Bristol to Plymouth, due 23.16 (extension of a train from Manchester).

Particular local features:

- The 7.00 from Cardiff will be unaltered as far as Birmingham, runs to Manchester, not Newcastle.
- The evening train to Cardiff will be later: Bristol depart 20.11, not 19.24. The stops between Cardiff and Bristol will not alter.
- Weston-super-Mare: all current trains unaltered, except the 20.44 arrival, which will be withdrawn<sup>14</sup>.

## 2. Plymouth (also Paignton and Penzance) and Bristol

In brief:

- many times and basic timetable pattern unaltered
- some slots in Cornwall swapped over,
- peak services at Bristol unchanged,
- some “adjustments” to Plymouth/Paignton slots.

Issues:

- Capacity: could there be a problem with the reduction in the number of westbound trains? E.g. Current 15.11 from Bristol TM immediately precedes 14.05 Paddington to Penzance train from Taunton westwards.
- potentially, the swapping of slots in Cornwall – the “too early/late now” syndrome.
- The new 6.56 from Paignton could well be in the “too early” category.
- The withdrawal of the 16.15 from Paignton: that removes a day return facility.
- It might not be possible for HSTs to be diagrammed on all trains needing extra capacity – no details until after Feb. '08 timetable conference<sup>15</sup>

The basic pattern and times of the timetable: unchanged – hourly to/from Plymouth, plus hourly to/from Bristol TM, plus extensions to Penzance, Paignton and Cardiff.

First trains: most are as now, exceptions:

- from Penzance at 6.28
- from Paignton at 6.56
- from Bristol to Plymouth at 6.34
- from Birmingham at 6.42 – this is the current 6.10, running direct to Cheltenham, arrives there and stations south at the same times as now.

Last trains: most are as now, exceptions:

- 21.58 from Bristol TM arrives Birmingham at 23.26, 17 minutes earlier than now

<sup>14</sup> This cut is made from this December's timetable.

<sup>15</sup> David Judson, Arriva, 9/10/07.

- 20.12 from Paignton, also provides later (c. 90 minutes) last through train from Newton Abbot, Exeter, etc.,
- Last through train from Birmingham, etc., to Cornwall will be at 17.13 (c. 60 minutes later than now)

Withdrawn trains:

- 6.40 from Plymouth (starts Paignton)
- 7.30 from Penzance (starts Plymouth)
- 9.30 from Penzance (starts Plymouth)
- 16.15 from Paignton (starts Bristol TM)
- 13.11 from Bristol to Paignton
- 15.11 from Bristol to Plymouth
- 18.36 from Newton Abbot to Plymouth
- 17.55 from Plymouth (10.10 from Glasgow Cen.) to Penzance

Other changes:

- additional train at 6.56 from Paignton, runs from Newton Abbot in path of the 6.40 from Plymouth, calls additionally at Teignmouth and Dawlish
- 8.25 from Plymouth starts from Penzance at 6.28
- additional 9.48 from Penzance, forms the 11.52 from Plymouth to Manchester
- additional train at 19.58 from Bristol TM to Birmingham.
- additional train at 20.12 from Paignton to Bristol TM, forms the 21.58 to Birmingham.
- 15.42 from Birmingham will run to Paignton, arr. 19.00, not Plymouth
- 19.42 from Birmingham will be extended from Bristol TM to Plymouth, arr. 23.16.
- additional train at 20.47 from Plymouth to Penzance (12.05 from Edinburgh)
- 18.42 from Birmingham will run to Cardiff, arr. 21.08, not Weston.

Particular local features:

- altered slots west of Plymouth
- overall reduction in Plymouth trains
- train to Cardiff to run c. 50 minutes later – due 21.08
- Weston calls retained, except current 20.44 arrival (15.22 from Newcastle) - n.b., this cut is made from this December's timetable.

### 3. Bournemouth, Surrey, Sussex, Thames Valley

#### In brief:

- many times and basic timetable pattern unaltered;
- only one train from anywhere in Surrey or Sussex – 6.00 from Guildford, and one train to Guildford, due there at 23.20.
- Some faster times beyond Southampton early/late in the day,
- 5.11 from Southampton withdrawn to Reading
- New 6.01 from Bournemouth.
- Later last trains to Bournemouth and Reading, but earlier last train to Southampton.

#### Issues:

- the minimal service to Surrey and the non-existent one to Sussex. Guildford's sole service is so early northbound (6.00) and so late southbound (arr. 23.20) that their usefulness to passengers is likely to be slight.
- The withdrawal of the last train to Southampton, currently the 19.24 from Manchester, due 23.47.
- The timing of the through trains from the North East/Edinburgh – 17.22 from Newcastle, due Bournemouth arr. 23.43 and 17.05 from Edinburgh, due Reading 23.43 give very late arrivals for stations in the Thames Valley and south thereof.
- Does the slower journey time between Leamington and Birmingham indicate poor paths and consequent reliability problems?

#### The basic pattern and times of the timetable:

- xx.10 and xx.40 from Reading, as now.
- xx.10 start at Bournemouth at xx.46 and take 4 minutes longer to reach Birmingham (6 minutes longer between Leamington and Coventry); they run to Manchester.
- xx.40 trains start from Reading, take 7 minutes longer to reach Birmingham (7 minutes added between Leamington and Birmingham); they run to Newcastle.
- Only one train from Guildford, at 6.00, Reading depart 6.40.
- Only one train to Guildford, the 19.28 from Manchester, 22.45 from Reading, arr. Guildford 23.20.
- xx.04 and xx.33 from Birmingham;
- xx.04 run via Coventry, usually start at Manchester and run to Bournemouth.
- xx.33 usually start at Newcastle and terminate at Reading. Journey times within a few minutes of today's.

First trains:

- 6.01 from Bournemouth, 6.10 from Reading.
- No change to southbound times.

Last trains:

- As now from Bournemouth (19.46 to Birmingham);
- 30 minutes later from Reading at 21.40, to Birmingham (arr. 23.22) via Solihull.
- 22.04 from Birmingham to Reading (later than now)

Withdrawn trains:

- 5.11 from Southampton to Reading,
- 5.15 from Gatwick to Guildford,
- 5.45 from Gatwick to Reading,
- 9.21 and 14.22 from Brighton to Reading,
- 17.57 from Guildford to Reading.
- 16.10. from Reading to Guildford,
- 11.08 and 18.11 from Reading to Brighton,
- 20.09 and 21.04 from Reading to Gatwick,
- 22.45 from Reading to Southampton.

Other changes: additional trains at:

- 20.40 and 21.40 from Reading, to Birmingham via Solihull.
- 20.33 from Birmingham (starts Newcastle at 17.22) to Bournemouth arr. 23.43,
- 22.04 from Birmingham (starts Edinburgh at 17.05) to Reading arr. 23.43.

Particular local features:

- The early/late departures/arrivals of North East/Scotland through trains:
- 6.01 from Bournemouth to Newcastle;
- 15.40 from Reading to Edinburgh (arr. 22.32);
- 17.22 from Newcastle, arr. Bournemouth 23.43;
- 6.49 from Edinburgh to Reading (arr. 15.13).

#### 4. Manchester

##### In brief:

- the proposed services between Birmingham and Manchester have the potential to upset a good number of passengers.
- Reduced stops: Stockport and Macclesfield will have only one train per hour,
- Congleton only two XC trains each way both at peak times.
- Journey times: a strange mix – northbound one train is 16 minutes faster, the other 16 minutes slower.
- Southbound better, both up to 10 minutes faster.
- The current half-hour interval is changed to 20/40 southbound and 35/25 northbound.

##### Issues:

- The reduction of stops at Stockport and Macclesfield to only hourly;
- much earlier last trains<sup>16</sup> from those stations to Birmingham, etc. – c. 87 minutes.
- The removal of most inter-city stops from Congleton, and consequent need to change at Stoke for Birmingham and all the other destinations now available without changing.
- The very strange changes to journey times, especially the 16 minute “variations” from Birmingham to Manchester. Presumably that is the result poor pathing – southbound trains with three additional stops take only 4 minutes longer. That could result in heavy loadings on the faster trains, with overcrowding.
- Removal of peak morning stops from Stafford reduces peak capacity to Birmingham.

##### The basic pattern and times of the timetable:

- the pattern is mostly the same for Manchester, Stoke, Wolverhampton and Birmingham.
- Departure times are between 4 and 14 minutes different.
- (The current 6.17 West Coast service to Euston via Birmingham will continue, retimed to 6.23.)
- Trains at xx.08 and xx.28 from Manchester.
- Usually the xx.08 run to Bristol; they stop only at Stoke and Wolverhampton, and take 1 hour, 26 minutes to Birmingham.
- The xx.28 trains usually run to Bournemouth; stop at Stockport, Macclesfield, Stoke, Stafford and Wolverhampton, and take 1 hour 30 minutes to Birmingham.
- Trains at xx.31 and xx.56 from Birmingham.

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<sup>16</sup> Mentioned to David Judson, Arriva, 9/10/07.

- xx. 31 trains usually come from Bristol and call only at Wolverhampton and Stoke, taking 1 hour minutes to Manchester.
- xx.56 trains usually come from Bournemouth and stop at Wolverhampton, Stafford, Stoke, Macclesfield and Stockport and take 1 hour minutes to Manchester.
- Almost all trains operate to the standard pattern,
- there are two trains that make additional stops to provide more trains at peak times for Stafford and Macclesfield in the northbound morning peak (6.28, 7.31 from Birmingham).

First trains:

- At 5.40 from Manchester, via Crewe and Stoke; 37 minutes earlier than now.
- At 5.56 from Birmingham, 5 minutes earlier than now.

Last trains:

- from Manchester at 22.08;
- much earlier southbound from Stockport, at 20.36 (22.03 now) and Macclesfield at 20.50 (22.16 now).
- The 22.56 from Birmingham will be 38 minutes later than now.

Withdrawn trains:

- None.

Other changes:

- 19.56 from Birmingham (now at 20.03) will not run via Crewe.
- Late trains earlier into Manchester.

Particular local features:

- Congleton's demotion,
- reduction of stops at Stockport and Macclesfield.

## 5. Edinburgh and Scotland

In brief:

- frequencies, times and basic pattern unchanged.
- Some changes to stops between Edinburgh and Newcastle.
- Shuffling of extensions to/from Glasgow, Dundee and Aberdeen.
- Early morning additional train from Edinburgh at 6.49 provides the sole through train to Reading.

Issues:

- No replacement for the current XC operated 16.31 from Edinburgh to Aberdeen (12.00 from Birmingham via the WCML).
- Last train from Edinburgh to WC destinations will be 75 minutes earlier because the 11.25 from Plymouth (Edinburgh dep. 20.14) will not stop at Carstairs.

- Through train from England to Aberdeen will run two hours later and arrive Aberdeen at 21.43.
- Reduction in stops at Morpeth.

The basic pattern and times of the timetable:

- pattern unchanged – hourly to/from Edinburgh;
- times within a few minutes of now.
- Some improvement in the last trains' journey times, with the 17.01 from Birmingham due at 22.13, 11 minutes earlier than now, and the last train arriving Edinburgh at 23.15, 15 minutes earlier than now.

First trains:

- as now, 6.05 from Edinburgh (to Plymouth, arr. 14.49).

Last trains:

- as now, 18.05 from Edinburgh to Birmingham, arr. 23.11.
- 18.01 from Birmingham to Edinburgh, arr. 23.13 (14.25 from Plymouth).

Withdrawn trains:

- 16.31 from Edinburgh to Aberdeen.

Other changes:

- Additional train at 6.49 from Edinburgh, calling at Berwick, Alnmouth and Morpeth, forms the 8.22 from Newcastle to Reading.
- Shuffling of slots beyond Edinburgh, with the 10.05 from Edinburgh starting from Aberdeen at 7.30, rather than from Glasgow at 9.00. However, there will be a replacement from Glasgow at 10.10, the 11.05 from Edinburgh.
- 12.05 and 14.05 trains from Edinburgh lose their stops at Morpeth.
- Additional train from Edinburgh at 18.11 (9.25 from Plymouth), calling at Haymarket and Motherwell, due Glasgow at 19.16.
- 6.15 from Bristol TM and 14.25 from Plymouth lose their stops at Morpeth.
- Current 19.01 from Edinburgh (8.30 from Penzance) will be extended from Dundee to Aberdeen, arr. 21.43.
- Additional train at 20.57 from Newcastle (extension of the 15.40 from Reading), calling at Morpeth, Alnmouth and Berwick, arr Edinburgh 22.32.
- Trains on this route will provide the service for Chesterfield and Burton/Tamworth (on alternate hours).

Particular local features:

- Possible reduction in afternoon peak capacity from Edinburgh to Aberdeen.
- Removal of current last northbound calls at Berwick and Dunbar.

## 6. Newcastle and Leeds

### In brief:

- frequencies, times and basic pattern unchanged.
- Chesterfield and Burton/Tamworth (on alternate hours) stops swapped from the Newcastle trains to those to/via Leeds.
- Newcastle trains speeded up by about 9 minutes southbound;
- more varied savings northbound – 2 to 11 minutes.

### Issues:

- Possibly the re-timing of the 7.49 from Doncaster. Although it starts back from Derby, its 44 minutes earlier departure from Doncaster might be too early.
- The new arrival of 8.37 in Newcastle might suit more passengers.
- Will the HSTs cover all the trains that require more capacity?
- The swapping of the Chesterfield, etc., stops should benefit more passengers than it upsets – Leeds is a bigger draw than Doncaster.
- The withdrawal of the 20.26 from Newcastle to Birmingham – last train now 19.40.
- What is the reason for the changes to stops at Chester-le-Street – a TPE/XC swap?

### The basic pattern and times of the timetable:

- unchanged – xx. 01 and xx.30 from Birmingham.
- xx.01 trains usually come from Plymouth and run via Leeds to Edinburgh, taking 2 hours 1 minute to Leeds and 5 hours to Edinburgh.
- xx.30 trains usually come from Reading and run to Newcastle via Doncaster, taking x hours.
- Southbound trains are at xx.22/25 from Newcastle and xx.10 from Leeds.
- Stops at Chester-le-Street are made by the Newcastle trains; when they call they depart Newcastle at xx.22.

### First trains:

- To Leeds (Edinburgh) off-pattern at 6.00, to Newcastle at 6.30.
- Southbound from Leeds at 6.10, Newcastle at 6.22.

### Last trains:

- To Leeds at 22.01 from Birmingham (18.25 from Plymouth);
- to Newcastle at 19.30 (17.40 from Reading).
- Southbound from Leeds at 21.10,
- Newcastle at 19.40 (46 minutes earlier than now).

### Withdrawn trains:

- 21.03 from Birmingham to Leeds;

- 6.16 from York to Derby,
- 20.26 from Newcastle to Birmingham.

Other changes:

- 6.37 from Nottingham to Birmingham (7.08 from Derby) to form the 8.04 from Birmingham to Bournemouth.
- New train at 19.25 from Newcastle to Derby, arr. 21.58, connects for Birmingham, arr. 22.54.
- 7.49 from Doncaster to Newcastle to start back from Derby at 6.00, and run up to 44 minutes earlier than now. It will not call at Chester-le-Street, arrive Newcastle 8.37.
- 22.01 from Birmingham speeded up by 27 mins. to Chesterfield, 38 to Sheffield, stops additionally at Wakefield and is due into Leeds at 0.02, 59 minutes earlier than now.
- Chester-le-Street gains stops northbound at 14.34, 17.34 and 19.34, but loses its stop by the 12.25 from Newcastle.

Particular local features:

- Additional stops at Chesterfield by the 6.30, 7.30, 16.30, 17.30 trains from Birmingham to maintain two-an-hour frequencies at peak times.