

## South Western Railways December 2018 Timetable Consultation

### Introduction & Summary

The three transport Authorities of Bournemouth, Poole & Dorset and the Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership welcome the opportunity to jointly respond to South Western Railways (SWR) December 2018 Timetable Consultation.

We have worked together to consider the proposals and welcome the journey time reductions from some stations but note that this has only been achieved at the cost of a downgraded service from medium and smaller sized stations, which will have a significant detrimental impact at a number of stations, which is not acceptable.

One of our aims is to encourage more people to use rail for both longer distance and local journeys, (a market sector that is currently not well served by rail in Dorset). To achieve this and grow railway patronage, the rail service needs to offer frequent (at least every 30minutes), regular headway, affordable and reliable services.

We believe that an alternative solution developed by the Dorset Authorities, could deliver the benefits of reduced journey times, more regular, closer to 'clockface', headways and mitigate all or most of the disbenefits of the proposed SWR timetable. Consequently, as part of our response, the authorities propose an alternative timetable, operating throughout the day, six and a half or seven days a week, which we would like to see further developed and implemented in place of the consultation timetable. This alternative timetable is attached as Appendix 1, starting page 8.

The proposed journey time changes for the two proposals, compared to the current timetable are shown below. This allows a comparison between the two proposals and shows the greater benefits accruing from the Dorset proposal.

### Journey Times to Waterloo

	Current	SWR Proposal	Difference from current	Dorset Proposal	Difference from current
<b>Weymouth</b>	2hr46 3hr00	2hr34 3hr03	12 min 3 min	2hr39 2hr39	7 min 21 min
<b>Hamworthy</b> <i>Upwey and Morton have similar time differences</i>	2hr14 2hr19	2hr31	17 min	1hr59 2hr 01	15 min 18 min
<b>Poole</b>	2hr09 2hr13	1hr57 2hr11	12 min 2 min	1hr54 1hr56	15 min 17 min
<b>Parkstone</b> <i>Branksome, Pokesdown &amp; Hinton Admiral have similar time differences</i>	2hr05 2hr40	2hr07 2hr22	2 min 18 min	2hr16 2hr16	11 min 24 min
<b>Bournemouth</b>	1hr50 1hr58	1hr43 1hr57	7 min 1 min	1hr43 1hr42	7 min 14 min
<b>Christchurch</b>	1hr50 2hr21	1hr49 2hr04	9 min 17 min	1hr58 1hr58	8 min 23 min

Journey time key: shorter Longer  
journeys in *italics* require a change of train

Tourism is an important contributor to the area's economic vitality, we have analysed and identified issues in the SWR proposal and have addressed them in the Dorset proposal, which we believe will better support tourism in the area.

We also take the opportunity to press for a better balance between the needs of cyclists and passengers on the trains operating in this area.

## Local Context

In April 2011, the three local transport authorities of Bournemouth Borough Council, Borough of Poole and Dorset County Council produced a joint Local Transport Plan (LTP) for the whole of the ceremonial county of Dorset. The plan sets out the priorities for transport in Dorset during the period 2011 to 2026.

One of the seven key strategy measures for the authorities is to improve public transport alternatives to the car. Three strategy elements address this measure:

- Building upon current public transport provision to improve the availability, quality, reliability and punctuality of services
- Developing a fully integrated public transport system which is easier to use for everyone
- Improving local accessibility and local connectivity for everyone, including the most vulnerable groups and rural areas of Dorset

The three local transport authorities are seeking to increase the role of rail travel in Dorset and have identified the potential for rail in two markets firstly, longer distance travel and secondly to increase rail's attractiveness and hence use for shorter distance local trips, particularly for travel to work and education. The present rail network has the potential and capacity to fulfil a greater role within the Dorset area and the South East Dorset conurbation in particular. The forthcoming timetable revision is a big opportunity to enhance services and provide an alternative to east - west road transport. The authorities have identified a need to make journeys by public transport in Dorset more affordable, pleasurable and simple, from beginning to end, including integration with other modes. Improvements to rail connectivity are identified in the Dorset LEP Strategic Economic Plan and are vital to support economic growth, links to new housing and business development.

For the past few years, the medium distance travel market within the conurbation has the highest annual growth in bus patronage anywhere in the UK. A major factor in this is growth in the East West Corridor which has seen investment to substantially increase bus frequencies, vehicle quality and ticketing.

The Authorities have commissioned two studies that identify rail use also has substantial potential to grow both in the conurbation and beyond. Rail can offer faster and more reliable journey times, avoiding road traffic congestion in the conurbation.

The Dorset Local Authorities and the Dorset LEP have published aspirations to improve rail travel and address current gaps in these potential markets:

- **Longer Distance Travel**, by reducing journey times, reducing the waiting times between services and providing earlier arrival time in London from the western side of the Dorset area.
- **Local Rail Trips**, by providing more frequent local services stopping at the stations between Hamworthy and Southampton
- **Leisure travel** by providing trains in the evening to meet changing late night customer travel patterns

- **Visitor Travel**, by providing attractive service levels to encourage weekend visits and day trips, including Sundays and Public Holidays. Responding to peaks in demand generated by large events and providing capacity on trains for people wishing to combine train travel and cycling
- **Connectivity**, by increasing the number of destinations available to/from the Dorset area within a reasonable time – comparable to existing car and coach journey times
- **Off Peak Travel**, by providing flexibility in ticketing to allow for next day returns along with specific fares to encourage local travel, including local multimodal travel

## Current Service

The current train service has a long-distance focus, providing services between Weymouth, Poole and Bournemouth to London via Southampton. The service consists of two trains an hour from Weymouth stopping at most stations between Weymouth and Poole (some of the smallest stations have just one train per hour). A third train per hour starts from Poole and stops at almost all stations to Southampton and then continues as a 'semi-fast' service to Farnborough Main and eventually onto London, but the journey times on this service are unattractive compared to the 'fast' services. Service levels at weekends, especially Sundays, are lower than during the week. This lower level of Sunday service also operates on Sundays of a Bank Holiday weekend making the Dorset area less attractive to rail users than it should be. Within the Conurbation the potential for local journeys is limited due to the 'skip stop' nature of the current timetable.

## December 2018 Timetable main commentary

### **QUESTION: South Dorset and Hampshire Local Services**

*Stakeholders have asked for faster journeys and improved service intervals. We plan that journeys from Weymouth to London will be up to 12 minutes faster and for the two trains per hour between Weymouth and Bournemouth to be spaced much nearer to a half-hourly frequency, Wool will see both Weymouth trains calling there. This however requires the link from some less busy stations to London to be broken at off-peak times with the trains instead providing cross Southampton connectivity to Fareham and Portsmouth. Same platform connections will be provided at Brockenhurst for passengers using the local service to connect to/from London.*

*Do you support the speeding up of services from Weymouth with improved service intervals between Weymouth and Bournemouth and the change in connectivity for smaller stations?*

Faster journey times to London has been a long-term aspiration of the authorities. We support the stated objective to reduce journey times on the South Western Mainline. However, we strongly believe that the proposed timetable benefits one group of users at the expense of significant detriment to several other groups of users, particularly passengers using the medium sized stations at Hamworthy, Parkstone, Branksome, Pokesdown, Christchurch and Hinton Admiral and at the smaller stations such as Upwey and Moreton.

We want to see an improved rail service that delivers journey time reductions without the disbenefits and believe that this can be achieved through other means than proposed.

Collectively the three local transport authorities believe that an alternative proposal can achieve both the train company's and our stated objectives. Our proposal is illustrated in a specimen hour attached at Appendix 1. This demonstrates a viable pattern of service between Weymouth and Southampton, retaining the onward timings to London and respecting the complex interaction with other train services. We also believe there are further potential journey time reductions available:

- By operating the class 444 and 450 units at 100% of their capability rather than the current practise of capping their power (and hence acceleration) to 65%

- By changing the stopping pattern between Southampton and London

Our discussions with Network Rail have identified a range of small scale improvements that would reduce journey times still further and we want to work with the train operator and Network Rail in the next few years to implement a programme to achieve this.

Whilst not specifically referred within the timetable consultation we are concerned that the proposed reduction in dwell times at some stations along the Weymouth - Waterloo route is not realistic and ask South Western Railways to review these proposals in detail to ensure that they are feasible, and monitor any changes made for a period post introduction and revise if necessary.

The reintroduction of a direct service to/from Portsmouth is welcomed. Connectivity between the South's coastal cities is poor and this service will go some way towards addressing this. The proposed journey times are not particularly attractive and we would urge further efforts be made to decrease the journey time for trips to/from Portsmouth.

The spacing of services towards a half-hourly frequency from and to Weymouth is supported as it is an improvement on the current timetable. However, we note that the more even headway of departures on the hour and 37 minutes past the hour at Weymouth is not maintained along the line and for example departures towards Southampton from Parkstone are at 40 and 49 minutes past the hour, giving a gap of almost 50 minutes between services. This is disappointing as provision of a regular pattern service is important to encouraging modal shift to rail from the private car within the conurbation where a consistent service pattern will encourage greater rail usage.

Whilst the timetable changes address some long-term aspirations and problems for rail travel in the conurbation as well as wider Dorset area, we do not believe that the proposals are adequate to ensure current usage is maintained and local connectivity is preserved.

In the medium term, a study commissioned by Bournemouth Borough Council, Borough of Poole and Dorset County Council with Network Rail has identified a number of low and relatively low cost infrastructure upgrades that would reduce journey times further and also allow more trains to run in the Dorset and Hampshire areas. We along with the other local transport authorities would encourage Network Rail and the Train Operator to prioritise these schemes which have a high rate of return. A copy of this technical work will be shared with the train operator and regulators.

### **Dorset Authorities Alternative Timetable Proposal**

This timetable, see Appendix 1, has been designed to achieve our stated objectives using the existing infrastructure and rolling stock resources. It is within existing operating procedures. The timetable could be implemented in December 2018 with very few interim measures. Minor changes at Hamworthy and Weymouth station approach, including improving signalling towards Dorchester, would deliver further benefits achievable by the future 2020 timetable change and add in resilience. Our joint proposal for the 2018 Timetable has a half hourly service from Weymouth to London, calling at almost all stations to Poole, then Bournemouth, Brockenhurst and Southampton.

A half hourly train would operate from Hamworthy to Southampton, stopping at all stations within the conurbation and then most stations to Southampton. At Southampton one of these trains would combine with a train from Weymouth and provide a 10 carriage direct service to London. The other train would continue to Portsmouth, with a 'same platform' connection to/from the London-Weymouth train at Brockenhurst.

An analysis of the proposed journey times is shown in the table below.

- Stations between Weymouth and Hamworthy gain significantly by retaining a half hourly service towards London, journey times are improved in both of the proposed timetables. However, the Dorset proposal gives overall timings better than either current or operator proposed timetables.
- Poole and Bournemouth both gain from reduced journey times, which are greater in the Dorset proposal.
- Medium sized stations between Hamworthy and Hinton Admiral retain a direct service and have good journey times towards London.

As far as the Dorset Authorities are concerned, the Dorset proposal keeps the benefits to the larger stations and has far fewer disbenefits for the medium sized stations between Hamworthy and Hinton Admiral. Operator dialogue may result in further improvements to the Dorset proposal and result in greater time savings than shown below.

#### All day Journey Times to Waterloo

	Current	SWR Proposal	Difference from current	Dorset Proposal	Difference from current
<b>Weymouth</b>	2hr46 3hr00	2hr34 <i>3hr03</i>	12 min 3 min	2hr39 2hr39	7 min 21 min
<b>Hamworthy</b> <i>Upwey and Morton have similar time differences</i>	2hr14 2hr19	<i>2hr31</i>	17 min	1hr59 2hr 01	15 min 18 min
<b>Poole</b>	2hr09 2hr13	1hr57 2hr11	12 min 2 min	1hr54 1hr56	15 min 17 min
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<b>Bournemouth</b>	1hr50 1hr58	1hr43 1hr57	7 min 1 min	1hr43 1hr42	7 min 14 min
<b>Christchurch</b>	1hr50 2hr21	1hr49 <i>2hr04</i>	9 min 17 min	1hr58 1hr58	8 min 23 min

Journey time key: shorter Longer  
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The half hourly service provides much more attractive local journey opportunities across the conurbation and will stimulate greater use of trains for these medium distance journeys, relieving local roads and the A31 trunk road which is currently at capacity between the Dorset area and Southampton.

The hourly train to Portsmouth will provide additional direct journey opportunities to passengers from Hamworthy eastwards. Passengers from stations between Weymouth and Holton Heath would have just one single 'same platform' connection at Bournemouth or Brockenhurst. Operating two trains per hour west of Poole will resolve the likely weekend overcrowding as passengers will be distributed across two trains per hour rather than one.

## **Tourism Needs**

Dorset, Poole and Bournemouth are major visitor destinations and many visitors want to arrive by rail, rather than driving to the area. Rail is the most important alternative mode of arrival, once visitors are here they can use the wide range of complimentary sustainable travel modes available, such as walking, cycling, buses, boat trips and ferries, as well as using the train for local journeys.

Visitor trips occur throughout the year, but predominantly between May and October and at school holiday times. Tourism data collected in 2015 by The South West Research Company for the Dorset area authorities, identified 25.1 million day trips to the Dorset area plus 3.5 million stays of one night or longer. Further growth in the visitor and conference markets is contingent on improvements to the rail travel experience, connectivity within the regional rail network and flexibility as laid out in the objectives.

One significant concern regarding the proposed South Western Railway timetable is overcrowding at popular visitor times. The proposed service provides an hourly train from London to Weymouth, which is limited to 5 carriages beyond Poole. The second train per hour from London is less attractive as it has a longer journey time and will terminate at Poole. This second train connects with the next London train rather than the train from Portsmouth, as a result many people will try to use the first train or change onto it at Poole, with the result that the first train will be heavily loaded throughout its journey from London and extra passenger will try to board at Poole. If visitors experience an unpleasant journey, they will choose to visit places with a better train experience and are hence less likely to return. This situation will not occur with the Dorset proposal as there are 15 carriages per hour to Bournemouth, with 10 carriages continuing beyond Poole towards Weymouth.

Surveys undertaken in Bournemouth identify key visitor origins as urban settlements within a 1.5hour travel time of the resort. The most recent Seafront Visitor data is from the 2015 Survey, which interviewed a sample of 755 visitors over the summer period, identified some of the most frequent points of origin for staying visitors to the resort as: London area, Reading, Guildford, Portsmouth, Birmingham, Wolverhampton, Southampton, Bristol and Coventry. For day visitors, key markets include the London area, Southampton, Portsmouth, Bath and Weymouth. These findings are likely to be applicable to the wider Dorset area too.

Any revised pattern of service also needs to have the capacity to lengthen trains and add duplicate services on these lines to meet demand around large key festivals in the Dorset area, such as the Poole Maritime Festival, major music festivals and the annual Air Festival in Bournemouth, which is currently rated one of the top free events in the Country and attracts over 1.2 million visitors each year over 4 days in August.

## **Economic Development Needs**

The Dorset growth corridor between Weymouth & Dorchester and the South East Dorset conurbation are thriving major business locations. The South East Dorset conurbation is home to one of the largest Financial and Business Services clusters in the UK with, for example, J P Morgan, Abbey Life and Nationwide in Bournemouth and LV and Barclays in Poole. Advanced manufacturing and high end engineering and aerospace is another important business sector in the conurbation which also has one of the fastest growing digital economies in the country, with a world wide reputation for digital animation and effects. Existing businesses need good quality rail services, particularly in terms of its connection to London and rail connectivity is an important factor in attracting inward investment.

According to data from Tom Tom, road traffic congestion in the Conurbation is increasing, with 36minutes of delay added to a one hour journey in 2016. This is an annual increase of 4%, making the conurbation the fourth most congested medium sized conurbation in the UK.

([https://www.tomtom.com/en\\_gb/trafficindex/city/bournemouth](https://www.tomtom.com/en_gb/trafficindex/city/bournemouth) ). Rail has the potential to speed up travel across the conurbation, the train taking just 14 minutes for the journey from Hamworthy to Bournemouth in our proposed timetable. Every commuter who switches from driving to rail takes one car off the road.

Rail will also play an important role in the Dorset growth corridor, providing improved local connectivity for commuting as well as the longer distance links that business needs

Our businesses report that for the South East Dorset conurbation and the Dorset Growth corridor to continue to achieve economic growth and manage its impact on the environment, a reliable, efficient and frequent railway service is essential. For their continued success, the existing services need to continue to connect to London and increasingly provide local services that enable quicker, more frequent journeys across the Conurbation and the growth corridor. Businesses' main requirements are that the services they use are convenient and reliable, the trains clean and comfortable with good quality, hi-speed Wifi, at seat power and telephony connections, which will facilitate mobile working and transform travel time into productive business time.

Our proposals have a good fit with the Government's recently released Industrial Strategy and an improved train service has a good fit with two of the objectives:

- Future of Mobility – We will become a world leader in the way people, goods and services move.
- Clean Growth – We will maximise the advantages for UK industry from the global shift to clean growth

Rail Services in the Dorset area can therefore contribute both directly and indirectly to these objectives and can attract investment to improve the attractiveness of the rail service and the contribution it makes to economic growth.

The Future Dorset proposals would create two new Councils in the Dorset area and provide a spur to growth in the Dorset growth corridor, whilst Poole, Bournemouth and Christchurch will come together to form the Second largest city in the South West and a great spur to increased economic activity, both of which will need a railway to match.

### **Other Issues - Impact of the refurbishment of the Class 450 & 444 units**

As currently proposed, the refurbishment of the class 450 & 444 electric trains used to provide the service to Weymouth will result in fewer cycle spaces. Whilst we recognise that there is a balance to be struck between providing additional seating and catering for a growing commuter and leisure cycle market, we remain convinced that there are other ways to address this issue by providing more flexibility to meet the demands of cyclists and those of maximising passenger seating at the busiest times.

For example, tip up seats, would allow more cycles, pushchairs etc. to be carried in the off-peak which would help to generate additional revenue from leisure based travel but also be able to be brought into use as seating during the peak. To integrate journey modes, it has to be possible for travellers to turn up 'on spec' with a cycle at least in the off-peak, without having to consider whether it is permitted, needs to be reserved in advance or whether there is likely to be spare capacity.

### **Contact Details**

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Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership	contact: Lorna Carver (lcarver@bournemouth.ac.uk )

## Appendix 1

### Dorset Authorities Proposed Specimen Hour Timetable

Weymouth to London		Example Hour					Following trains (for info)			
Weymouth			<b>06:02</b>			<b>06:32</b>	<b>06:40</b>		<b>07:02</b>	
Upwey			06:07				06:45		07:07	
Dorchester West							06:52			
Dorchester South			06:16			06:42			07:16	
Moreton			06:22			06:48			07:22	
Wool			06:28			06:54			07:28	
Wareham			06:35			07:01			07:35	
Holton Heath						07:05				
Hamworthy	3		06:16			06:46			07:16	
Hamworthy	1					07:10			07:42	
Poole	A		06:20	06:46		06:50	07:14		07:20 07:46	
	D		<b>06:21</b>	<b>06:47</b>		<b>06:51</b>	<b>07:15</b>		<b>07:21 07:47</b>	
Parkstone			06:25			06:55			07:25	
Branksome			06:28			06:58			07:28	
Bournemouth	A		06:34	06:56		07:04	07:24		07:34 07:56	
	D		<b>06:36</b>	<b>06:58</b>	<b>07:03</b>	<b>07:06</b>	<b>07:29</b>		<b>07:36 07:58 08:03</b>	
Pokesdown			06:40			07:10			07:40	
Christchurch			06:44			07:14			07:44	
Hinton Admiral			06:49			07:19			07:49	
New Milton			06:53			07:23			07:53	
Sway			06:58			07:28			07:58	
Brockenhurst	A		07:03	07:11	07:16	07:33	07:42		08:03 08:11 08:16	
	D		<b>07:04</b>	<b>07:12</b>	<b>07:18</b>	<b>07:34</b>	<b>07:43</b>		<b>08:04 08:12 08:18</b>	
Beaulieu Road						07:39				
Ashurst (New Forest)			07:12						08:12	
Totton										
Redbridge										
Millbrook										
Southampton Central			07:22	07:24	07:31	07:52	07:55		08:22 08:24 08:31	
			07:27			07:54	07:57		08:27	
Terminates			London	Cross Country	Portsmouth	London	Bristol	London	London	Cross Country
			08:41			09:11				
			Notes							
			0632 ex Weymouth - Could reduce journey time by 3 mins if run as 10 carr from Weymouth							
			xx14/xx44 ex Hamworthy could start from Poole at xx50/xx20 using existing infrastructure							
			xx34/xx44 - same platform connection at Brockenhurst							



London to Weymouth		Example Hour					Following trains (for info)			
Arrives from		London	Cross Country	Bristol	London	Portsmouth	London	Cross Country	Bristol	
	A	10:26	10:41		10:56	10:57	11:26	11:41		
Southampton Central	D	<b>10:28</b>	<b>10:30</b>	<b>10:43</b>	<b>10:58</b>	<b>11:00</b>	<b>11:28</b>	<b>11:30</b>	<b>11:43</b>	
Millbrook										
Redbridge										
Totton										
Ashurst (New Forest)			10:37					11:37		
Beaulieu Road						11:10				
Brockenhurst	A	10:41	10:44	10:57	11:11	11:14	11:41	11:44	11:57	
	D	<b>10:42</b>	<b>10:45</b>	<b>10:58</b>	<b>11:12</b>	<b>11:15</b>	<b>11:42</b>	<b>11:45</b>	<b>11:58</b>	
Sway			10:50			11:20		11:50		
New Milton			10:55			11:25		11:55		
Hinton Admiral			10:59			11:29		11:59		
Christchurch			11:04			11:34		12:04		
Pokesdown			11:07			11:37		12:07		
Bournemouth	A	10:56	11:11	11:12	11:26	11:41	11:56	12:11	12:12	
	D	<b>10:57</b>	<b>11:12</b>		<b>11:29</b>	<b>11:42</b>	<b>11:57</b>	<b>12:12</b>		
Branksome			11:16			11:46		12:16		
Parkstone			11:19			11:49		12:19		
Poole	A	11:10	11:20		11:42	11:50	12:10	12:20		
	D	<b>11:11</b>	<b>11:21</b>		<b>11:43</b>	<b>11:51</b>	<b>12:11</b>	<b>12:21</b>		
Hamworthy	2		11:15			11:47		12:15		
Hamworthy	3		11:25			11:55		12:25		
Holton Heath			11:19					12:19		
Wareham			11:23		11:52			12:23		
Wool			11:30		11:59			12:30		
Moreton			11:36		12:05			12:36		
Dorchester South			11:43		12:12			12:43		
Dorchester West					11:58				12:58	
Upwey					12:05	12:19			13:05	
Weymouth		<b>11:51</b>			<b>12:10</b>	<b>12:23</b>		<b>12:51</b>	<b>13:10</b>	