



Department for Transport

Leanne Stott and Stephen Rose
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From the Minister of State
and Minister for London
Jo Johnson MP

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Our Ref: MC/232369

- 7 AUG 2018

Dear Ms Stott and Mr Rose

Thank you for your email of 5 July to Chris Grayling and me, attaching letters on behalf of Letchworth Garden City emergency services workers, theatre workers and London transport workers, about reinstating the xx.12 and xx.42 Cambridge flyer departures from London King's Cross after 1900.

The amended timetable, introduced on 15 July, is an important step towards improving reliability and performance for passengers. This timetable prioritises peak-time services and aims to reduce long gaps between services. For Letchworth, this does mean that some off-peak services have been taken out but on the whole these are stopping services.


This amended timetable has performed relatively well so far. We have seen a large reduction in the number of cancellations, meaning that passengers can now plan ahead. In particular we have seen a reduction in cancellations on the hourly semi-fast Thameslink Cambridge to Brighton service, which takes 43 minutes between St Pancras and Letchworth.

Once the 15 July timetable has provided a sustained period of good performance, Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR) will reintroduce the services they have taken out to the planned level of the May 2018 timetable. Once this has been delivered, GTR will be able to start delivering the next wave of the Thameslink Programme (originally planned for December 2018, but now postponed temporarily). This will bring an extra semi-fast service each hour, all day on the Cambridge to Brighton route.

I appreciate the impact that the loss of fast services in the evening can have on people's ability to socialise and to get to and from work. GTR did consult on these changes, and, following feedback, added stops at Letchworth on the 19:57 (33 mins), 20:42 (27 mins) 20:54 (36 mins), 21:54 (36 mins) and 23:42 (27 mins) services from King's Cross.

Following further feedback and continued dialogue with local rail user groups, GTR has sought solutions to reinstate evening calls on all fast trains at both Letchworth and Royston after 19:00, as recently announced at a public meeting held in Letchworth. In line with industry processes, GTR has submitted the proposals to Network Rail for their approval.

Thank you again for your email and for raising your concerns with us. I hope this reply is helpful.

pp  (Signed by private secretary to avoid delay)

JO JOHNSON

cc: Oliver Heald MP