



campaigning by
The Railway
Development
Society Limited

Thames Valley Branch

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Response to September 2015 Chiltern Timetable consultation by Railfuture
Thames Valley Branch

Railfuture is a national voluntary group campaigning for more and better rail services for the UK, both passenger and freight. It is independent of any political parties, trade unions and businesses. The Thames Valley branch covers Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire. In addition to our individual members many rail user groups are also members. This response also incorporates a contribution from our London & South East Branch.

We welcome and endorse the proposed timetable which builds on the success of the present one and in particular are pleased to see the standard clockface pattern and the good connections at Banbury in both directions. Naturally we are delighted to see a half hourly service between Marylebone and Oxford Parkway throughout the day and with alternate stops at High Wycombe and Haddenham & Thame. Bicester having a total of four tph off-peak is welcome given the planned levels of growth in that town.

One small change we would welcome would be earlier trains from Islip to both Oxford & London (in addition to the stop in the 05.40 up) to allow arrivals before 07.30 for Oxford and 08.00 for London. This could be achieved by including Islip stops in the 06.08 from Marylebone and in the 06.48 from Oxford Parkway respectively. Additionally, a late evening departure from London to Islip might also be worthwhile. The other small stations (Kings Sutton, Saunderton & Little Kimble) all have departures from Marylebone after 23.00, thus allowing a full evening out in London, but Islip's last is 20.05. A stop in the 23.10 would remedy this.

One downside which we would like to comment on concerns the service for Saunderton. The most popular morning and evening trains now call at Ruislip and allow two fast rains through, losing 11 minutes each. Most of the hourly departures now have additional stops and lose 6 minutes.

Success through incremental development is a tried and tested means of growing the railway, and has been the hallmark of the development of Chiltern Railways.

We therefore welcome the additional weekday evening services at Northolt Park [three in the mid-evening 'up'] and at Sudbury Hill Harrow [the later last train 'down' and the six across the evening 'up']. These are useful increments to progressively build up patronage from the communities around these stations.

On the same principle, we would encourage the addition of an even later last 'down' train at Sudbury Hill Harrow, and the addition of some morning peak 'down' services and some evening peak 'up' services at Sudbury & Harrow Road to steadily strengthen your 'offer' available there. All these changes would in total be valuable building-blocks towards further improvements, with for example Sudbury Hill Harrow gaining a similar overall level of weekly service as Northolt Park.

Andrew McCallum
Secretary, Railfuture – Thames Valley Branch.

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