

Thoughts here comprise inputs from TransWilts team, with feedback from Great Western Coffee Shop, Wiltshire Council officers and Heart of Wessex CRP

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As we approach some potentially major timetable updates, I've been giving some thought to the knock on effects - dangers and opportunities offered - onto regional and local services in Swindon and Wiltshire. Rather than starting with a look at each individual issue or potential issue, I thought it might be an idea to see if there were any over-arching principles and I (tuned with suggestions from the moderator team here) came up with the following:

## **Principles for changes at timetable re-casting**

1. Changes should be **informed by customer feedback**, surveys and groups, giving particular weight to requests from away from the railway which can encourage traffic not previously catered for. *Business decisions to trade off better service for existing passenger flows versus serving new flows which are screaming out for resource in order to be served at all may be needed.*
2. Where a service is frequent, amendments to the times within the hour in themselves are not a big concern
3. Where a service is infrequent, primary care must be taken to ensure that the **existing developed customer base** for each train is considered
4. **Connectional journeys are important!** Connections to and from other operators of trains and buses are important too. We're looking at total journey.
5. **Robustness** of timetable and connections in preference to speed. Saves agro, saves taxi fares! Robustness applies to not only the trains themselves but also the staff to operate the trains, 7 days a week, and to have principled contingency plans to minimise customer delay minutes.
6. Most local and regional journeys are return ones; make sure they **work both ways**. If you have to choose to make one excellent connection in preference to another southbound, make sure you do the same northbound too.
7. **Clockface if you can**. Regular if you can't 'clockface', but can manage regular. And keep the stopping pattern regular too. Firebreak allowed with care. Where two services serve the same flow, they should be clockface or at least regular when interlaced.
8. Look carefully at **start and end of service**. Remember that a quiet final train isn't just about passengers on that train - it's also about the same people when they make their opposite journey. And about being there as a fallback for people who can then be persuaded to catch the train before.

9. **Look to the future.** Leave paths where extra trains may be run later, and look at where development may be taking place away from the railway so that you're ready for it.

10. **Identify underperforming stations** - places where journeys per passenger in the catchment are low. see if there are lessons to be learned from a timetabling viewpoint.

11. **Learn from stations that are performing well** - make very sure you don't disturb their success.

12. **Timetabling is about resources.** Look to see if use can be made of a train that is parked in a platform or a siding for a lengthy period waiting to make its next trip. Is there time to fit in a journey with sufficient leeway it won't impinge on that planned next trip?

13. Will an enhancement to the timetable between A and C benefit your service but clash with an existing service at B? There's no point wrecking an existing successful journey opportunity unless you are confident there will be a significant net gain overall.

14. Link services together to make for **regional through** journeys rather than connections - **linking major urban centres** as stated by a principle from key industry players at the TWSW / DfT / GWR event on 3.7.2017.. But at the same time do so only where the length of train / stock type required doesn't vary dramatically between the joined route parts.

15. **Embrace your customers.** Listen to their views, explain what you're doing and what you're not able to do. Take them into your trust. Work with the communities - be they informal or CRPs and let them help explain what's happening in good time to your customers.

*In light of comments away from this board ... these guidelines are limited to timetable change within boundaries of specified stock levels and their technical implementation. They are not intended to induce changes to principle service pattern specifications, nor are they looking at how best to explain them / publicise them to new customers - important though those aspects are, they are outside the remit of this discussion.*

## Specifics ...

**Journeys to, from, through and within Wiltshire** which are on my "watch list" ...

TransWilts peak capacity

TransWilts Sunday morning

TransWilts northbound early Saturday evening

TransWilts late evening, esp from Swindon

TransWilts "reverse" commuters - to Trowbridge at normal peak

TransWilts commutes into Swindon - near-peak gaps

Link TransWilts south from Westbury

Link on to Oxford at Swindon?

Dilton Marsh - "decide on your market"

Early morning Sunday train from Warminster

Frome inbound / outbound commuters (and other gaps?)

Frome to Taunton

Westbury connections ... what's important if not a through service?

Swindon / Chippenham to Salisbury and Southampton

Portsmouth / Southampton to Taunton, Plymouth and beyond

Swindon / Chippenham to Taunton and beyond

Swindon / Chippenham to Weymouth

Bedwyn / Pewsey to Trowbridge / Bath. Also Paddington / Reading to

Trowbridge

Other connections

Note current THROUGH traffic Melksham to Kemble

Note current THROUGH traffic between Swindon / Chippenham and Cornwall

From Swindon and south west there of to Oxford at Didcot

From Melksham at Trowbridge and at Chippenham to Bristol

From Wiltshire to the Midlands and North

From Swindon and Chippenham to Plymouth and Cornwall

Later train(s) Bristol and Bath to Chippenham

Plug SWI/Chippenham to Bristol gap - 06:42 to 07:44 from Chippenham

Plug Bristol to Chippenham gap - 20:30 to 21:50 (Bristol times)

Note gap in arrivals at Chippenham from Swindon - 21:58 to 23:05

Extend 2 hourly semifast London - Reading - Newbury - all stations to Exeter to Paignton?