

West Coastway timetable proposals - West Sussex County Council comments – August 2023

The County Council has made the following comments in response to proposals by Southern Railway to potentially change the operation of rail services along West Coastway routes between Brighton, Portsmouth, Southampton, Bognor Regis and Littlehampton.

The key proposals are summarised on the Southern Railway website: [West Coastway: Proposed Timetable Changes](#).

- The County Council has noted that there are a range of positive and negative impacts that could affect the West Sussex community. The County Council has asked for more information about the number of passengers that will be affected by the proposed timetable changes.
- The County Council has noted that the proposals are broadly consistent with the West Sussex Transport Plan 2022-2036 which includes an objective to improve the speed and quality of West Coastway rail services.
- The County Council support the proposals to provide greater resilience to the timetable which should mean fewer cancellations. The County Council have requested further information about the forecast impact on reliability of services.
- The County Council support the proposals to facilitate regular 'even interval' departure times (i.e. consistent time gaps between services) each hour from key stations, e.g. from Portsmouth and Southampton.
- The County Council has requested that the proposals clearly explain the onward travel arrangements and planned improvements at Woolston, which would make this location an attractive interchange point for access to Southampton City Centre.
- The County Council has highlighted concerns about; the loss of direct Brighton-Portsmouth services; longer journey times between Chichester and Portsmouth and less even intervals between departures westbound from Chichester; and, the loss of direct services from stations between Southampton and Cosham, and Gatwick Airport.
- The County Council has asked what additional resources would be required to address these issues and whether any of these issues; for example, to

improve journey times between Chichester and Portsmouth, could be addressed without fundamental changes to the timetable.

- The County Council has noted that the changes to service patterns could impact school services and strongly advised that Southern Railway give consideration to all secondary schools and colleges along the corridor and engage with affected schools and bus operators to understand and address any potential issues.

The County Council has sought further information from Southern Railway about its plans for wider engagement and indicated that it is keen to understand the views of other stakeholders about the proposals following the engagement period.