

The South Western Report

Issue 6 | March 2020



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2020 is a very important year

A message from our Managing Director Mark Hopwood

Since becoming Managing Director in January, I've traveled around the network speaking to many passengers and colleagues, and the feedback has been consistent: We need to rebuild trust in South Western Railway.

2020 is a very important year for us, and regardless of the outcome from the Department for Transport (DfT), our immediate focus is getting performance back-on-track, so more trains run on-time.

To help me take on this challenge, I've begun building a stronger team at SWR. We've Mike Houghton as our new Chief Operating Officer, and we're also pleased that Network Rail have strengthened their team on the Wessex route to support the work we're doing. We have good people in SWR, so it's important we support them with the right leadership and experience from other organisations.

This team also includes our excellent frontline colleagues (e.g. station staff, guards and drivers) who do their very best for our passengers - we're recruiting more each month. They're now also armed with the latest real-time service information, so passengers can know how to get where they need to go - especially during disruption.

Our progress in closing many of Sir Michael Holden's recommendations also lays a solid foundation for us now and in the future. It shows how far we've come, and how hard we're working behind the scenes to genuinely change how we do things for the benefit of our passengers.

This summer sees the exciting introduction of our modern £895m Class 701 trains, which will run on the suburban routes, as well as testing of the Vivarail Class 484 trains on the Island Line. This comes off the back of us completing the

£70m refurbishment of the 'Desiro' fleet (page 7) and the reintroduction of the Class 442 trains (page 8) in January.

While big challenges and uncertainties lie ahead this year, I can assure our passengers and stakeholders that we're determined to earn back their trust.



Extra compensation for passengers

Those affected by the RMT's strike action in December 2019 are now entitled to up to 5 days' worth of extra compensation following our announcement in February.

During the strike, SWR did its utmost to keep passengers moving and carried over 80% of the number of passengers it normally would have done at this time of year.

However, having listened to customer feedback, and given the duration and intensity of the strike, we're now offering additional compensation, over and above the normal delay repay arrangements.

Mark Hopwood, our Managing Director, said:

"Since I arrived at SWR I have listened carefully to customer feedback and I believe it is right that we offer additional compensation over and above our Delay Repay scheme for the disruption caused by December's strikes. Whilst SWR worked very hard to keep people moving during the strikes, I know that our passengers often still had

to cope with delays, cancellations and packed trains and the compensation reflects that.

"This compensation package will provide season ticket holders and daily ticket holders who traveled frequently during the strike with compensation to recognise the disruption they faced."

More information is available here:
www.southwesternrailway.com/december-2019-strike-compensation

Compensation will run in two phases. Season ticket holders we hold details on will be contacted in Phase 1 to arrange compensation, Phase 2 will be for passengers who we don't hold details for, including weekly season ticket holders, who will need to apply for compensation. We'll notify customers when each phase opens.

Performance: speed is time



We're saving passengers thousands of minutes every month by working with Network Rail to safely remove speed restrictions on our network more quickly.

Temporary speed restrictions - usually 50mph - are put on by Network Rail to keep services running reliably and safely following engineering works (e.g. renewal of rail, sleepers and ballast), emergency track repairs or severe weather (e.g. high temperatures or wintery conditions).

On average, more than 46 speed restrictions are in place on our network every month,

and we review each one. In 2018/2019, temporary speed restrictions resulted in nearly 315,000 lost minutes for our passengers from trains running slowly.

Over the last year, great strides have been made to reduce how many minutes we lose.

Following the Holden Report recommendations, Network Rail has improved its track maintenance and repair operations. For us this means, following any damage to tracks, we can get our service up and running more quickly. As a result, we've seen year-on-year delays reduce by 40% in 2019/20, saving passengers more than 150,000 minutes of delays.

In February, seven restrictions were removed from our network in a single week. This helped to save more than 4,000 minutes for those travelling on our suburban and mainline routes.

Our collaboration with Network Rail continues to bear-fruit as we work to deliver tangible results for our passengers and ensure more services run on time.

National Rail Passenger Survey: Autumn 2019 results

In the latest National Rail Passenger Survey (NRPS), we scored 74%. While this was a slight improvement on last year's results, we want to see it much higher and consequently we're working towards ensuring a better score next time.

We know we need to improve our performance to better our passengers' satisfaction levels. In collaboration with Network Rail, we're working hard to make these changes. We're beginning to see gradual improvements as a result of our efforts to recruit more guards and drivers as well as reduce delays caused by temporary speed restrictions and external factors, such as trespassing.

The £1.2bn investment in modernising our fleet, across the franchise, is making more of an immediate difference to passengers as scores for frequency (+4%), punctuality (+2%), extra capacity

(+3%) and on board facilities, like Wi-Fi (+2%) and powers sockets (+25%), have increased. The refurbishment has helped us introduce 5,000 extra seats for passengers on our long-distance routes, and we've added 80 extra services per week in the January timetable.

Our efforts to equip more staff with access to live travel information has resulted in our passengers appreciating their helpfulness as scores for customer service on board the

train (+4%) and at the station (+5%) have increased. Over the course of the franchise, their presence will expand as we recruit more employees.

Over the coming months, we'll roll out a new programme to improve the appearance of our stations and our new modern Class 701 trains will be introduced to transform the quality of service for passengers on the suburban routes.



Driving performance:

Improving the Shepperton Line

The Shepperton Route is one example of how we're forensically examining performance route-by-route, train-by-train to improve services for our customers.

The Shepperton line has been performing poorly. Problematically, delays on this line also have an impact on the wider network when late trains from the route feed into the busy mainline at Norbiton.

To resolve this critical issue, and improve performance on the route, a dedicated working group was set up within the Joint Performance Improvement Centre (JPIC).

Based at Waterloo station, the JPIC is the collaboration of our and Network Rail's expertise to tackle performance and ensure daily operations start strong and recover from incidents quickly and efficiently.

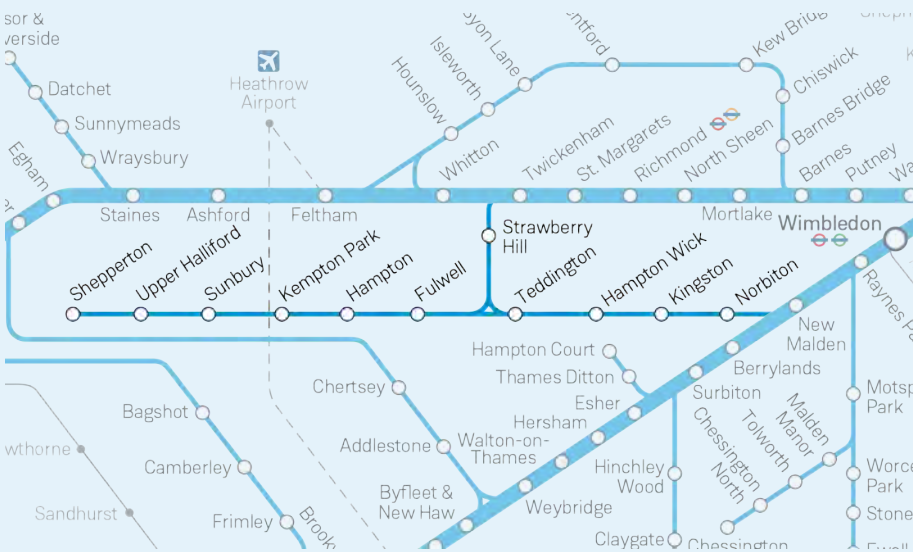
Following live observations and analysis of passenger boarding behaviour and performance data, the working group concluded that there was not one issue in isolation that caused the delays. Instead, disruption was a result of a build-up of small delays and seconds lost at various points on the line.

The solution: The Class 707 train.

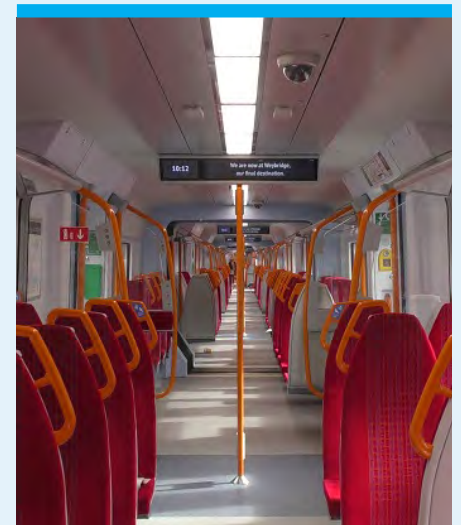
Introduced following the launch of the new timetable in January, the route is now served entirely by Class 707s, replacing the mix of older Class 455 and 456 trains which previously worked the route.

The wider doors, larger capacity, as well as superior acceleration and braking of the modern Class 707s, has helped reduce the time lost from Shepperton to Norbiton by nearly 50%. In practical terms, our customers on the Shepperton route, will now see an additional 560 services arriving at Waterloo on-time each year. A real improvement for our customers.

The working group continues to meet on a regular basis, and several more time-saving initiatives are being planned to improve performance across number of other routes for our passengers.



A route map showing the Shepperton Line (above) and the interior of a modern Class 701 train (right)



LEDs light the way forward

Investing to reduce our carbon footprint

We're investing nearly £6m to replace every lightbulb at 184 stations on our network with new LED lighting by the end of the franchise in 2024.

This is a major programme for us as it's pivotal in our commitment to minimise our impact on the environment by becoming more sustainable. By the end of our franchise, we want to reduce our overall energy usage by 41%.



Lighting accounts for around 80% of all our non-traction electricity usage, and by replacing every lightbulb with an LED, we aim to reduce our consumption by nearly 20% and save around £4m in electricity and maintenance.

Areas of the station used by passengers, including forecourts, platforms and car parks, will see new and more reliable lighting installed which are designed to last nearly ten years before being replaced.

Community Rail Conference

Showcasing the hard work of our Community Rail Groups

In early February, we hosted our annual Community Rail Conference which showcased the important role of community and station adoption groups in helping to make stations a great gateway to the communities they serve.



Paul Webster from ACoRP speaking at the Community Rail Conference

Held at Winchester's Guildhall, the event was opened by our Community Rail Manager, Andy Harrowell, who outlined the successes that have been achieved over the last year. These include, increasing the number of station adoption groups from 7 to 36, and winning awards for our Community Ambassador programme and for Templecombe as best Small Station at the National Rail Awards.

The conference was well attended by nearly a hundred delegates representing a diverse group of community and station organisations. Our Managing Director, Mark Hopwood, participated in an engaging question and answer session following his presentation, while stakeholders, including the DfT,

the Association of Community Rail Partnerships (ACoRP) and Network Rail, gave presentations alongside some of our Community Rail Partnerships (CRPs).

CRPs gave updates on their activities based on the four pillars of the DfT's new Community Rail Development Strategy: providing a voice for the community; promoting sustainable, healthy and accessible travel; bringing communities together and supporting diversity and inclusion; and supporting social and economic development.

We received very positive feedback from the conference, with many saying they left energised to do more based on what they learnt from the event.

Performance: Disruption at Eastleigh

Freight train derailment caused significant disruption for passengers

The partial derailment of a large freight train in February caused significant disruption to our passengers as all lines between Basingstoke and Southampton were blocked for several days.

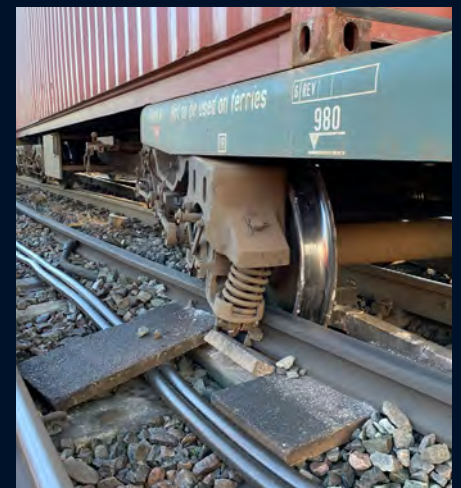
The lines finally reopened after Network Rail installed a new section of track, although services to Eastleigh were restricted while permanent repairs were undertaken.

Network Rail took responsibility for the derailment. It concluded that the derailment was caused by tracks moving apart, after a bolt was sheared-off under the weight of the freight train.

An independent investigation is being undertaken by the Rail Accident Investigation Branch to examine the sequence of events which led to the accident.

Mark Hopwood, our Managing Director, said:

"We would like to thank our staff for their dedication and hard work in helping people get home, as well as our passengers for their patience during this very challenging period."



Bigger. Better. Brighter: Twickenham station opens

Twickenham station opened in January, offering a bigger, brighter and better travelling experience for the 5.5 million passengers who use the station every year.

The spacious new station now has a large, welcoming public plaza for customers – around half the size of Twickenham Stadium’s rugby pitch – step-free access to all platforms, 250 cycle spaces to encourage travellers to consider alternatives to using their car, and a larger revamped hall with more open space for passengers. The station also has a new and enhanced queuing system, helping to safely manage large crowds for events at Twickenham stadium.

The project was funded and built by Solum, a joint venture between Network Rail and Kier Property, and opened just in time for rugby fans flocking to Twickenham Stadium for the 2020 Guinness Six Nations Championship.



Mark Hopwood, our Managing Director, said:

“I’m sure our 5.5m passengers who use the station every year will be delighted that the old, cramped station has been replaced by a new, modern much bigger station.

“We’d like to thank our passengers for their patience during the station’s construction.”

Mark Killick, Network Rail Wessex route Director, said:

“This collaborative programme shows how the rail industry can work together with external partners to fund and deliver rail upgrades that will not only benefit passengers but also benefit the communities where they live through regeneration of the station area.”



Assisted Boarding Point



Need help boarding one of our trains?
Call 0800 528 6599
Tell us where you are, where you’re travelling to
and what kind of assistance you require.

South Western
Railway

New ‘Assisted Boarding’ trial

Six stations on our network are trialling an innovative new ‘Assisted Boarding’ scheme that helps customers with reduced mobility to have a smoother experience boarding the train.

In the first phase, customers who booked Assisted Travel at one of our trial stations were asked to wait in a designated space on the platform near the boarding ramps. By doing this, it enabled guards to identify and help customers requiring assistance to board the train more quickly and easily.

The project has just completed phase one following an initial trial run at Earlsfield, New Malden and Teddington stations. Phase two sees the scheme rolled-out to include three additional stations, Dorchester South, Strawberry Hill and Hampton, and will include passengers who haven’t booked assistance before travelling.

The trials are ongoing, and we’ll update readers later in the year on the success of the scheme.

Desiro-able refurbishment completed

All Class 444 and 450s trains now fully upgraded following £70m programme

We're pleased to announce the final refurbished Desiro train has entered passenger service. The completion of the programme means passengers on one of Britain's busiest rail networks can now benefit from the fleet's 5,000 extra seats.

Customers travelling long-distance between London Waterloo, Weymouth, Poole and Portsmouth stations can also enjoy state-of-the-art features, including improved Wi-Fi and access to SWR|Stream, new inductive charging tables and power sockets to help customers stay connected, refreshed toilets and ergonomically designed seats throughout for more comfortable journeys.

Neil Drury, Engineering Director, said:

"This massive refurbishment train programme is a huge investment which offers customers, using our longer-distance services, a quality on-board experience."

Sambit Banerjee, Managing Director of Siemens Mobility's UK Rolling Stock business, said:

"We are extremely proud to achieve this very significant milestone in this project and to be contributing to an enhanced experience for SWR's passengers."

The refurbishment of all the 172 Class 444 and 450s trains was completed by the original manufacturer, Siemens.

The investment is part of our wider £1.2bn plan to offer customers extra capacity, more frequent trains and better connectivity, together with station improvements and a smarter ticket buying experience.

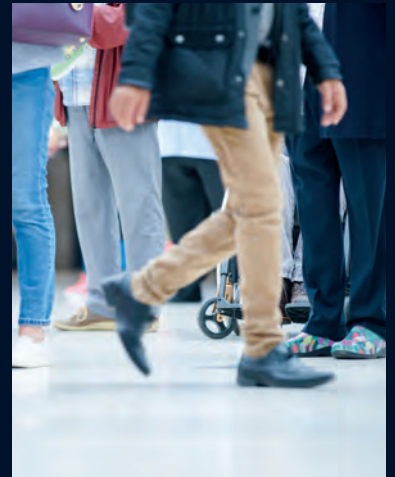
We've now also begun refurbishing our West of England line diesel trains.



Colleagues posing with a repainted Class 444 train

Listening to the voice of our passengers

Recruiting Members for our independent Customer Council



As part of our commitment to listen and be open and honest with our customers, we've begun recruiting new Members for our Customer Council.

Acting as an independent voice, the Council is a vital tool in representing the views of our passengers to senior management. Members will help respond and give feedback to business ideas, input into project teams and working groups, and relay customer feedback to develop new ways we can work to improve our service.

The Council is made up of the Chair, a digital representative, and four regional representatives from areas across our network who will work with our rail user groups and stakeholders.

The new Council Members will be announced shortly.

We also held the second of our new 'Meet the Manager' sessions in late February. Our senior managers met directly with customers to help answer their questions about our services.

Class 442 trains re-enter service

The Class 442 fleet has entered service, following a slight delay caused by signaling issues. Four of our 10-car trains are now running on the long-distance routes from Waterloo to Portsmouth and Poole.

The trains have been running since the beginning of the new year, with customers benefiting from more spacious '2+2 seating' and modern facilities, including quality Axminster carpets, at-seat power for mobile devices and real-time passenger information displays. Wi-Fi is also provided throughout as well as accessible toilets.

Neil Drury, Engineering Director, said:

"We're really pleased that these refurbished trains are now in passenger service."

"We've already had positive feedback about the extra space provided with the 2+2 seating configuration and other benefits such as Wi-Fi, LED lighting and real-time passenger info systems."

"We're proud of the fact the works have been undertaken at Eastleigh and Bournemouth depots. This has meant investment in local facilities across the our network, helping to boost the economy and secure jobs for our people living in the communities we serve."

"We will look to introduce all of the Class 442s in the fleet back in to service as soon as possible."



Colleagues posing with a reintroduced Class 442 train

South Western
 **Railway**

Get in touch

If you have any questions or queries about SWR, please contact our stakeholder team:

Jane Lee, Head of Stakeholder and Communications
E: Jane.Lee@swrailway.com

Andrew Ardley, Regional Development Manager
E: andrew.ardley@swrailway.com
West - Bristol area, Dorset, Devon, Somerset and Wiltshire

David Wilby, Regional Development Manager
E: david.wilby@swrailway.com
Metro - London, Surrey and Thames Valley

Phil Dominey, Snr Regional Development Manager
E: phil.dominey@swrailway.com
Central - Hampshire, Solent and Isle of Wight.

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