

**North Hertfordshire District Council Thameslink Response – prepared in consultation with the Executive Member for Policy, Transport & Green Issues**

**Extract of Relevant Questions from Questionnaire**

**Question 14:**

***Do you support proposals to approach engineering works differently? Please select all options you support.***

***Reduced frequency on some routes after 2300 on Weekdays and Saturdays***

***Earlier last trains on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays on some routes***

***Later first trains on Sunday mornings on some routes***

***✓I don't support proposals to change the current engineering works hours***

***Any further comments on this proposal?***

The District Council opposes in principle to any increase in overnight engineering works which would have an impact on the timing of first and last train services. Hertfordshire residents rely on early morning trains to commute into central London, and on late night trains from central London to facilitate changing work patterns and attendance at evening leisure events. There also continues to be increased retail, leisure and employment activity on Sundays.

A reduced frequency on some routes after 2300 might be acceptable provided that first and last train times are not altered, but the District Council would support Hertfordshire County Council's wish to see train loading data on late services before it supported such a change.

**Question 25:**

**Thameslink Mainline Route TL5: Peterborough – Stevenage – Central London (via London Bridge) – East Croydon – Redhill – Gatwick Airport – Horsham**

The diversion through the central core of services on the Stevenage route is welcome because of the increased journey opportunities that this provides, particularly to central London destinations and to connections to Crossrail.

However, the loss of direct connections to Peterborough from Hertfordshire stations south of Stevenage is a retrograde step. The District Council would wish to see a connection for Knebworth to Peterborough. It would also wish to see further details of the interchange between the Peterborough and Cambridge services.

**Question 26:**

**Thameslink Mainline Route TL6: Cambridge (semi-fast) – Stevenage – Central London (via London Bridge) – East Croydon – Gatwick Airport – Brighton**

The diversion through the central core of services on the Stevenage route is welcome because of the increased journey opportunities that this provides, particularly to central London destinations and to connections to Crossrail.

The District Council considers that it imperative to see the inclusion of Baldock as a calling point on this service, in order that this town does not lose off-peak semi-fast services.

As part of the North Hertfordshire District Council proposed Submission Local Plan it is proposing approximately 3,400 additional homes in Baldock to be developed by 2031. The consultation needs to take into consideration this planned growth.

**Question 27:**

**Thameslink Mainline Route TL7: Cambridge (stopping) – Stevenage – Central London (via London Bridge) – Swanley – Maidstone East – (Ashford International)**

The diversion through the central core of services on the Stevenage route is welcome because of the increase journey opportunities that this provides, particularly to central London destinations and to connections to Crossrail.

**Question 76:**

**Do you support the proposed frequency improvements throughout the Great Northern routes?**

Yes

No

Any further comments on this proposal?

The proposed frequency improvements are welcomed in principle.

However, six Hertfordshire stations lose semi-fast services, (Baldock, Knebworth, Welwyn North, Welwyn Garden City, Hatfield and Potters Bar). North Hertfordshire District Council would wish to see a better service for these stations.

**Question 77:**

**Do you support the proposed changes which will see Knebworth, Welwyn North, Welwyn Garden City, Hatfield and Potters Bar served by half hourly trains to and from Cambridge instead of hourly trains to both Cambridge and Peterborough?**

Yes

No

Any further comments on this proposal?

The loss of direct connections to Peterborough from Hertfordshire stations south of Stevenage is a retrograde step. North Hertfordshire District Council wishes to see further details of interchange between the Peterborough and Cambridge services. Interchange times should be minimal, and should be maintained throughout the day. The suggested 8 minute connection northbound is acceptable, but the 23 minute wait on southbound services is excessive.

**Question 78:**

**Do you support the proposed frequency improvements throughout the Great Northern Metro routes and proposed changes to some calling patterns?**

Yes

The District Council supports a higher frequency service on these routes. However, the District Council would welcome investigation of other options on the Hertford Loop which could maintain a good frequency but also offer the introduction of semi-fast services.

**Question 81:**

**In light of these developments, on balance do you agree that curtailing the Moorgate to Stevenage services at Watton-at-Stone from May 2018 until further notice to protect proposed frequency increases on the Hertford North, Cambridge and Peterborough routes is the right approach?**

Yes

✓No

North Hertfordshire District Council finds the proposals unacceptable. Although there might be relatively small numbers of people affected, the disruption to individual journeys will be significant, will last for at least two years, and has no definitive end date. The overall effect will be to reduce rail travel in the long-term.

The District Council therefore urges GTR to consider alternative interim arrangements which will maintain the train service.

**Question 83:**

Great Northern Mainline Route GN2 (Cambridge local): Royston – Stevenage – Welwyn North – London Kings Cross

The District Council would wish to see the Knebworth service retained. As part of the North Hertfordshire District Council proposed Submission Local Plan it is proposing approximately 600 additional homes in Knebworth to be developed by 2031. The consultation needs to take into consideration this planned growth.

**Question 84:**

Great Northern Mainline Route GN3 (Peterborough): Peterborough – Huntingdon – Biggleswade – London Kings Cross

**Question 85:**

Route GN4.1: Stevenage – Hertford North – Gordon Hill – Alexandra Palace – Finsbury Park – Highbury & Islington – Old Street – Moorgate

Route GN4.2: Hertford North – Gordon Hill – Alexandra Palace – Finsbury Park – Highbury & Islington – Old Street – Moorgate

Route GN4.3: Gordon Hill – Alexandra Palace – Finsbury Park – Highbury & Islington – Old Street – Moorgate

The District Council wishes to see the improved frequency on the GN4.1 service introduced with the rest of the timetable changes in 2018. The potential bus substitution for several years is not acceptable.

**Question 87:  
Any final comments on the 2018 proposals?**

The overall increase in services will be beneficial to most Hertfordshire residents. However, there are retrograde elements to the proposals with the loss of semi-fast services or direct connections in Baldock and Knebworth, given the amount of planned housing growth in the District to 2031 as part of its proposed Submission Local Plan. The District Council would consider it imperative that this is reconsidered and that this is discussed further with the Council. Although, it is difficult to understand the full implications of these (e.g. waiting times for connections) without detailed timetable information.

The key element of the 2018 timetable will be connections, including between local services, with London Underground, and with long-distance services at Stevenage, Luton / Bedford and Watford Junction.

It is noted that a second round of consultation will be held in Spring 2017. It is requested that the consultation period should be of sufficient duration for proper analysis by stakeholders.

It is further requested that major stakeholders including the District Council are alerted in advance of any significant changes that will be included in the next round of consultation.

As outlined in the North Hertfordshire District Proposed Submission Local Plan which covers the period 2011 to 2031 and proposes 14,000 dwellings as it's objectively assessed housing need to be delivered by 2031. The Plan proposes significant housing growth of approximately 3,400 dwellings at Baldock plus 19.6Ha of employment land, 1,500 dwellings at Letchworth Garden City, 1,000 dwellings at Hitchin and approximately 600 dwellings at Knebworth. All which will rely on an efficient rail service.