

## Public notices

STRATEGIC RAIL AUTHORITY

### RAILWAYS ACT 1993

#### PROPOSAL TO DISCONTINUE RAILWAY PASSENGER SERVICES

The Strategic Rail Authority (SRA) gives notice under Section 38 of the Railways Act 1993, as amended by the Transport Act 2000, that it proposes to withdraw the following services:

Services between West London Junction and Latchmere No. 3 Junction (the Sheepcote Lane Curve) which connects the South West Main Line from London Waterloo with the West London Line  
on or after 1 October 2004.

Objections to the proposed closure may be made to the Secretary of State for Transport by 1 June 2004 by writing to:

Kevin Liptrott, Department for Transport, Network Rail General Branch, Zone 3/29, Great Minster House, 76 Marsham Street, London SW1P 4DR.  
Telephone: 020 7944 8753. Facsimile: 020 7944 2154.  
E-mail: kevin.liptrott@dft.gsi.gov.uk

A statement of the reasons for the proposed closure can be inspected on any working day between 10am and 4pm or obtained by post from the SRA at 55 Victoria Street, London SW1H 0EU. Telephone 020 7654 6853, or from: The Director, London Transport Users Committee, 6 Middle Street, London EC1A 7JA.  
Telephone: 020 7505 9000 (Monday to Friday, 09.30 to 17.00).

There will be no charge for copies.

Regular direct alternative services operate between London Paddington and Bristol/Cardiff Central, and there are also services available connecting London Waterloo and Bristol/Cardiff Central with a change of trains at Reading or Salisbury.

More particular information regarding alternative services is contained in the statement of reasons referred to above. It should be noted that although no regular scheduled passenger services would operate over the Sheepcote Lane Curve if the Secretary of State gave his consent to this proposal, the network would remain in regular use in connection with Eurostar empty stock movements and freight services, and also as an emergency diversionary route.

**Signed: ROBERT PLAMPIN**

**DULY AUTHORISED BY THE AUTHORITY**

# **STATEMENT OF REASONS FOR THE STRATEGIC RAIL AUTHORITY'S PROPOSAL TO DISCONTINUE PASSENGER SERVICES BETWEEN WEST LONDON JUNCTION AND LATCHMERE No. 3 JUNCTION ("SHEEPCOTE LANE CURVE")**

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Strategic Rail Authority (SRA) has proposed under Section 38 of the Railways Act 1993, as amended by the Transport Act 2000, to discontinue all the passenger services on the line between West London Junction and Latchmere No. 3 Junction (the Sheepcote Lane Curve) in the London Borough of Wandsworth, on or after 1 October 2004. The SRA has proposed to do this because the operation of the services would incur subsidy that would exceed the benefits derived, the usage of the services is low, their provision is inconsistent with the SRA objective of reducing the number of operators at London termini and alternative services exist.

In Winter 2003/04 the following services are timetabled to use the Sheepcote Lane Curve:

Mondays to Thursdays only 20:16 Pembroke Dock to London Waterloo (arriving 04:13).  
Tuesdays to Fridays only 05:05 London Waterloo to Maesteg (arriving 09:11).

Full details of these services are in Annex 1.

This statement of reasons is prepared in support of the proposal to withdraw the two services detailed above that operate non-stop between London Waterloo and Reading via Queenstown Road (Battersea), the Sheepcote Lane Curve, West Brompton, Kensington Olympia and the Great Western Main Line.

It should be noted that although the Sheepcote Lane Curve will no longer be used in relation to any regular scheduled passenger services, it will continue to be used for freight services and for empty stock movements by Eurostar services between Waterloo International and North Pole depot, and also as an emergency diversionary route.

Services between London Waterloo and South Wales/Manchester via Salisbury and Bristol Temple Meads were introduced by British Rail in September 1994. In September 1997, one of the Mondays to Fridays services in each direction was diverted to operate via the Sheepcote Lane Curve and Reading. The other services, which will also be withdrawn, use an alternative route that is not affected by the proposed closure of the Sheepcote Lane Curve. None of these services were part of the Passenger Service Requirement for the original Wales & West franchise let in September 1996, which became the Wales & Borders franchise in October 2001.

## **STATEMENT OF REASONS**

### **Economic**

The London Waterloo to Wales services were not included as part of the Passenger Service Requirement in the franchise specification for services for the new Wales & Borders franchise, as the SRA economic appraisal indicated that the subsidy required was

greater than any wider benefits that would be derived from continuing the service. This conclusion was confirmed during the refranchising process when bidders were asked to provide their own estimates of the subsidy that they would require to continue their operation. However, due to the constraints of the timetable bidding process these services are included in the franchise agreement with Arriva Trains Wales (ATW), the operator of the new Wales & Borders franchise which commenced operation on 7 December 2003, for the period up to the end of the Winter 2003/04 timetable on 22 May 2004.

### Passenger Use

Train counts between Reading and London Waterloo in April and September 2003 and February 2004 indicate that on average, approximately 6 passengers per day used the service from Reading to London Waterloo and 2 from London Waterloo to Reading. Train counts between London Waterloo and Cardiff Central are shown in Annex 2.

Loadings on the 05:05 from London Waterloo increased west of Reading to, 33 from Swindon, and 105 from Bath Spa. The additional FGW service departing from Reading at 06:11 meets this demand. Demand for the 20:16 Pembroke Dock to London Waterloo service east of Cardiff did not indicate that a replacement service from Cardiff Central was warranted: Loadings on this service were at their maximum of 18 on departure from Cardiff Central at 00:25 and in the range of 12 to 7 between Newport and Didcot Parkway.

### Combining franchises: London termini

The provision of these services is also inconsistent with the objective which, following a positive response to its consultation document, "Combining franchises: London termini 12 March 2002", the SRA is pursuing of reducing the number of different franchise operators at London termini.

### Alternative services

The alternative services for those via the Sheepcote Lane Curve between London Waterloo and Reading (i.e. dep. London Waterloo 05:05, arr. Reading 06:00; dep. Reading 03:00, arr. London Waterloo 04:13) will be operated by First Great Western Link as follows:

|                   |      | Mondays to Fridays |       |
|-------------------|------|--------------------|-------|
| London Paddington | dep. | 03:35              | 06:00 |
| Reading           | arr. | 04:30              | 06:31 |
|                   |      |                    |       |
| Reading           | dep. | 02:34              | 04:34 |
| London Paddington | arr. | 03:26              | 05:30 |

Connections between London Paddington and London Waterloo using taxis or by bus with either one or two changes, are available.

The principal route between London Waterloo and Reading (via Clapham Junction and Staines) which is operated by South West Trains, is not affected by this proposal. Services will continue to operate over it as normal, half-hourly Mondays to Saturdays and hourly on Sundays.

For those passengers who use the services affected by this proposal to travel direct to, or from stations beyond Reading, there are alternative services via the Great Western Main Line into and out of London Paddington with changes, where necessary at Reading, Bristol Temple Meads, Bristol Parkway, Cardiff Central or Bridgend. Step free access is available to the platforms at these stations. Disabled passengers can book assistance through the Disabled Persons Reporting System (DPRS) should they require help to make changes between trains. 24 hours notice is required to arrange assistance through the DPRS. Bakerloo Line Underground services provide direct connections between London Waterloo and London Paddington. Direct connections by the Number 705 bus and taxi are also available.

The SRA has reached an agreement with First Great Western (FGW) for it to provide an alternative for the Reading to Cardiff Central element of the 05:05 London Waterloo to Maesteg service. This service is planned to depart Reading at 06:11 and arrive at Cardiff Central at 08:17. The planned timings of this service at all calling points are shown in Annex 1 (c). ATW will operate the Cardiff Central to Maesteg portion of the current through service from London Waterloo, departing from Cardiff Central at 08:21, to Maesteg, arriving at 09:11, as now.

ATW will operate a 20:16 Pembroke Dock to Cardiff Central service in the same times as the current through service from Pembroke Dock to London Waterloo.

The first and last FGW services of the day between London Paddington and Bristol Temple Meads/Cardiff Central/Swansea will be as follows:

|                      |      | Mondays to Fridays |       |       |       |
|----------------------|------|--------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| London Paddington    | dep. | 06:15              | 07:00 | 22:10 | 23:35 |
| Bristol Temple Meads | arr. | 07:57              |       |       | 01:30 |
| Cardiff Central      | dep. |                    | 09:01 | 00:20 |       |
| Swansea              | arr. |                    | 09:56 | 01:25 |       |
|                      |      |                    |       |       |       |
| Swansea              | dep. | 03:30              |       | 20:27 |       |
| Cardiff Central      | dep. | 04:25              |       | 21b28 |       |
| Bristol Temple Meads | dep. |                    | 05:22 |       | 22:45 |
| London Paddington    | arr. | 06:43              | 07:10 | 23b38 | 00:47 |

b = Change Cardiff Central

The planned timings of these services at all calling points with connections to all destinations served by the direct London Waterloo to Maesteg and Pembroke Dock to London Waterloo services are shown in Annex 1 (a to d).

## Fares

A comparison of fares from selected stations to London valid to 22 May 2004 is shown in Annex 3. These include fares which are valid by ATW only and which will be withdrawn after that date. These are the SuperAdvance Single (which must be booked by 18:00 on the day before travel) and the Apex Single (which must be booked at least 7 days in advance). Return SuperAdvance and Apex fares are double the single fares.

The ATW SuperAdvance and Apex fares are significantly cheaper than the other refund restricted, quota controlled advance purchase tickets valid on the FGW services between London and Bristol/Wales (route Slough). In the case of SuperAdvance Single, the route Slough fares are more than twice the price of the equivalent ATW SuperAdvance and Apex Single fares. For return journeys, SuperAdvance Returns routed via Slough/any permitted route are in the range of 35 to 50% higher than those by the ATW service only. With Apex tickets, the difference is in the range of 12 to 24%.

The withdrawal of the ATW services removes the lowest advance purchase fares available between Wales and London. However, these fares generate very few sales on the services via the Sheepcote Lane Curve: A total of 5 bookings of Apex and SuperAdvance tickets were made in a 3 week period in February and March 2004 in the Cardiff to London direction, and none in the London to Cardiff direction. This indicates that the withdrawal of these fares will not in itself lead to disbenefit for passengers using services via the Sheepcote Lane Curve.

## SUMMARY

The continued operation of the services via the Sheepcote Lane Curve would incur subsidy that would exceed the benefits derived.

The usage of the services between Reading and London Waterloo is very low and alternative services exist between Reading and London Paddington.

The provision of services via the Sheepcote Lane Curve is inconsistent with the SRA objective of reducing the number of operators at London Termini.

Usage of the London Waterloo to Maesteg service increases west of Reading and a replacement service will be operated between Reading and Cardiff Central to cater for this demand. The Cardiff Central to Maesteg portion of the through service from London Waterloo will continue to operate.

The Pembroke Dock to London Waterloo service will continue to operate as far as Cardiff Central. Usage of the service east of Cardiff is low and does not justify the provision of a replacement service to London.

Alternative services to all destinations affected by the withdrawal of the services via the Sheepcote Lane Curve will be available using either earlier or later services.



Department for  
**Transport**

From the Minister of State

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- 4 NOV 2004

**RAILWAYS ACT 1993 – SECTION 38  
PROPOSAL TO DISCONTINUE RAILWAY PASSENGER SERVICES BETWEEN WEST  
LONDON JUNCTION AND LATCHMERE NO.3 JUNCTION (“SHEEPCOTE LANE  
CURVE”)**

On 8 April 2004 the Strategic Rail Authority (SRA), in accordance with Section 38 of the Railways Act 1993 (“The Act”), published a Closure Notice detailing a proposal to discontinue all railway passenger services between West London Junction and Latchmere No. 3 Junction (the Sheepcote Lane Curve). The Sheepcote Lane Curve connects the South West Main Line from London Waterloo with the West London Line linking Clapham Junction, Kensington Olympia and the main lines from Paddington and Euston.

The SRA has proposed this closure because the operation of the services would incur subsidy that would exceed the benefits derived, the usage of the services is low, their provision is inconsistent with the SRA objective of reducing the number of operators at London Termini and alternative services exist.

Until 22 May 2004 a service was operated by Arriva Trains Wales (ATW) over this section of line on Mondays to Thursdays only forming the 20:16 Pembroke Dock to London Waterloo (arriving 04:13) and Tuesdays to Fridays only forming the 05:05 from London Waterloo to Maesteg (arriving 09.11). On average only six passengers used the service between Reading and London Waterloo and just two between London Waterloo and Reading. After 22 May a taxi service operated on Tuesdays only between Kensington Olympia and London Waterloo leaving at 03:45 arriving at 04:13 and returning at 05:05 and arriving at 05.35.

The Closure Notice specified that any objections to the proposed closure may be made to the Secretary of State for Transport by 1 June in writing. Seven representations were received by the Secretary of State of which three were observations and the remainder were objections.

The representations received were copied to the London Transport Users Committee (LTUC). LTUC considered the written representations and submitted their report to me on 4 August in accordance with section 43(3)(c) of the Act. I have considered the LTUC report (including the minutes of the public meeting which are referred to in the report), together with the written representations.

I note LTUC's conclusion (at paragraph 5.6 of their report) that there would not be any hardship caused due to the withdrawal of services over the Sheepcote Lane Curve.

I note the point LTUC make in their report about providing replacement taxis before consent to a proposed closure has been given, and I would encourage the SRA in future to seek to maintain the railway service until after the proposal has been consented to, wherever this is practicable.

I am satisfied that the SRA provided the Committee with sufficient relevant information regarding the closure and the cost of maintaining passenger services over the Sheepcote Lane Curve.

I note and endorse LTUC's suggestion in their report that there should be a review of the format and content of closure notices so as to help improve the clarity and customer focus of notices. I understand that the SRA propose to lead such a review. The Rail Passenger Council/Committees and London Transport Users' Committee should be invited to contribute to this review.

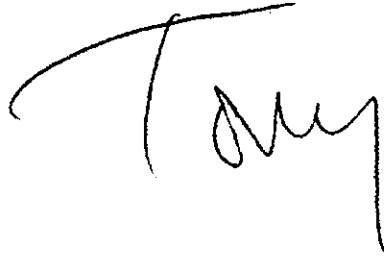
I have considered all the evidence put before me (including the SRA statement of reasons, the objections which have been lodged and the LTUC report) and on balance I have decided to consent to the closure, subject to a condition set out below.

LTUC felt that there was legitimate concern about the future availability of the Sheepcote Lane Curve for passenger services. It welcomed SRA's assurances that should consent be given to the termination of passenger services using the line it would continue to be used for freight services and for empty stock movements by Eurostar services between Waterloo International and North Pole depot and also as an emergency diversionary route. Network Rail has confirmed to the Strategic Rail Authority that it had no plans that will affect its availability for future passenger use, except for possessions booked in the usual manner, and it will continue to be maintained to the current standards.

However, LTUC requested that a condition be attached to the closure to protect the future availability of the line. The Committee recommended that the LTUC and TfL be informed of any changes proposed that would limit the future use by passenger rail services of the Sheepcote Lane Curve and that they be afforded full opportunity to make representations before any final decision is reached.

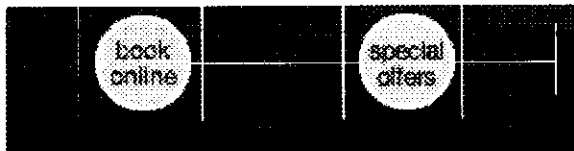
I support LTUC's reasoning and their proposal which is intended to protect the interests of rail users. I have therefore decided that my consent to the closure should be on the condition that the SRA should ensure that the LTUC and TfL are consulted in good time in advance of any changes which may be proposed that would affect the future use of the Sheepcote Lane Curve by passenger services.

I am copying this letter to every person who is the operator of a station within the area affected by this decision, and (as I am obliged under section 43 of the Railways Act 1993) in doing so require them to publish this letter at those of the stations which they operate that are within the area affected by the closure. I am also obliged to send a copy of this letter to certain other bodies. I am accordingly copying this letter to Network Rail, the Office of Rail Regulation, First Great Western, Arriva Trains Wales, Wessex Trains, Transport for London and LTUC.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tony', with a large, sweeping initial 'T'.

**TONY MCNULTY**





### **Withdrawal of Kensington Olympia-London Waterloo Replacement Road Service from Tuesday 14 December 2004**

Following the decision by the Secretary of State to allow the closure of the railway line between West London Junction and Latchmere No. 3 Junction (the Sheepcote Lane Curve) in the London Borough of Wandsworth to passenger services, the following road services will be withdrawn from 14 December 2004 (last day of operation 7 December 2004).

#### **Tuesday only**

Kensington Olympia dep. 0345  
London Waterloo arr. 0413

London Waterloo dep. 0505  
Kensington Olympia arr. 0535

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