

From the Managing Director



Dear stakeholder,

I want to start this newsletter with an update on the Thameslink Programme. As you may be aware, the final phase of the Thameslink Programme - the redevelopment of

London Bridge Station – is about to start.

This massive programme of work has already helped us add new trains and longer services to the Thameslink route, including our first 12-carriage trains and better, step-free stations at Blackfriars and Farringdon. Now, the rebuilding of London Bridge will open up the Thameslink route to many more destinations north and south of the capital, including our services from Peterborough and Cambridge.

Over the next few weeks, we will be holding a series of roadshows with our delivery partners to tell our customers and stakeholders what's going to be happening at London Bridge and how services will be affected. Details of these can be found on the new Thameslink website (www.thameslinkprogramme.co.uk) and in the key dates section.

It's not just London Bridge that we're looking to improve. Together with Network Rail, we recently received planning consent for first phase of the Hatfield Station redevelopment. Work is due to start in the new year on the brand new 378-space car park, which incorporates an improved transport interchange, taxi ranks and space for three new shops and cafes. We have been working with people in the Hatfield community to make sure we deliver the station that they want.

Thank you to everyone who provided information about their passenger transport liaison meetings. We're still missing some dates, so keep your emails coming.

Yours Sincerely,

Neal Lawson
Managing Director

How did we do in Period 7?

Following our record-breaking success in Period 6, we have remained ahead of our performance targets despite some major disruption on the network which had a negative impact on a number of services.

Overall, **our public performance measure was 92.25%**, ahead of our target of 91.86%.

The **Great Northern route** saw few disruptions this month, but was severely affected by engineering problems near New Barnet, which caused a number of service cancellations on the 16th of September. We achieved a PPM of **92.66% on the Great Northern route**, just ahead of our target figure of 92.57%.

On the **Thameslink route** we were able to exceed our performance target of 91.40%, with a **PPM of 91.95%**. There were several incidents outside of our control throughout the period, including a vehicle striking a bridge at Leagrave, a fatality at Gatwick and signalling problems at St. Pancras.

Just 24% of delays were caused by factors within FCC's control. 61% of delays during period 7 affected Network Rail infrastructure, while 14% were caused by other Train Operating Companies. We are continuing our work with Network Rail and other TOCs to reduce the impact of disruptions on passengers.

Key Dates

November

8 October – 7 December – Leaf fall timetable

27 October – 11 November – Royal British Legion collecting Poppy Appeal donations at all FCC managed stations

1 November – Meet the Manager on-board the 14:40 Blackfriars to Radlett Service

1 (PM), 2 (AM) November – Thameslink Roadshow (Brighton)

5 (AM), 8 November – Thameslink Roadshow (London Bridge)

7 (PM) November – Thameslink Roadshow (Bedford)

8 (PM) November – Thameslink Roadshow (Harpenden)

29 November – Meet the Manager at Harpenden Station

29 November – New Thameslink website launches

Are we missing the date of your local passenger transport liaison meeting? Please let us know.

Graffiti Clean Up

First Capital Connect has seen a high number of trains - one third of our total Thameslink fleet - damaged with graffiti in recent weeks. We had a huge job on our hands to deal with the backlog of vandalised trains as it can take a team of four people up to 6 hours to completely remove graffiti from each train.

Thanks to the upgraded facilities at Bedford Carriage Sidings and the extremely hard work of our train cleaning staff, we have been able to remove the graffiti from the majority of our trains in record time and with minimum impact on customer service. We expect all trains to have been cleansed of graffiti by the end of November.

We are working with various police forces to identify the vandals behind the attacks, and with our partners to increase security around our trains overnight. We welcome the recent prosecution of a 23-year-old man from Croydon in relation to several instances of graffiti damage to trains and railway infrastructure and the arrest of a further 11 people in relation to vandalism.

We thank the British Transport Police, the Metropolitan Police and police forces throughout the south-east for their help and hard work in tackling this vandalism.

Preparing for Winter

With winter weather already affecting much of the UK, we are working to ensure that our stations and trains remain open and ice free throughout the winter. In the last week, we have had teams working overnight to spread salt and grit at our stations helping to ensure customer safety in the icy mornings.

In the event of snow, FCC and our partners will be working round the clock to make sure that our lines, station platforms and car parks remain clear for customers. We have built up supplies of de-icing agents and equipment to ensure we have the resources we need to hand. Network Rail will be running additional de-icing and snow-plough trains, which will help us keep our trains running.

Our engineering team are also working to minimise disruption. They are currently trialling new anti-snow filters, which have been successfully used in Scotland and have installed extra heaters to prevent train doors freezing in position.

Computer Says "Go!"

Thanks to the work of Hornsey-based rolling stock inspector Keith Taffs and his team, First Capital Connect has a new computer tool that will speed the time it takes to deal with failed trains, leading to fewer cancellations and the quicker evacuation of passengers.

The Train Assisted Faults and Failures System is believed to be the UK's first web-based diagnostic system for failed trains and can be used by both train service controllers and engineers.

It guides the controller/engineer in conversation with the driver of the stricken train through the most logical steps to fix the fault in the shortest space of time. If the problem can't be rectified the system will guide them to the options for either evacuating the passengers in the best way possible or attaching another train to push or pull it out.



The system advises what emergency couplers might be needed to move the train and identifies if there are any compatibility issues with the differing classes of trains that may be used, while all the time running a timer and advising those in charge of the next course of action.

Head of engineering production Jason Long hopes the system will save over 45 hours' worth of delays in its first six months of introduction. Already, there are 46% fewer delay minutes attributable to train faults this year, some of which can be attributed to the new system."

Keith was highly commended in the category Rail Engineer of the Year at the RailStaff Awards 2012 for his dedication and hard work the development of The Train Assisted Faults and Failures System.

Stakeholder News

First Capital Connect

New Timetable, New Services

First Capital Connect's new timetable comes into effect on 9 December 2012. The new timetable will see several more trains calling at West Hampstead Thameslink and more 12-carriage trains running on the Great Northern route.

West Hampstead Thameslink will benefit from seven extra Saturday services. There will also be an additional London-bound weekday evening service, leaving Bedford at 16.40 and calling at Flitwick, Luton, Luton Airport Parkway, Harpenden and St. Albans, as well as minor changes to other services.

On the Great Northern route, between 250 and 1000 extra peak hour seats will be available every day on services at Peterborough, Huntingdon, St Neots, Sandy, Arlesey, Biggleswade, Hitchin, Stevenage and Finsbury Park. On off-peak services to and from Cambridge and Peterborough there will be 2,400 more seats daily.

New timetable books with full details will be delivered to stations early next month. Meanwhile train times are available online at www.nationalrailenquiries.co.uk.

Poppy Appeal 2012

Between the 27 October and the 11 November, First Capital Connect is supporting the collection of donations by the Royal British Legion for the annual Poppy Appeal at its 74 stations, a decision warmly supported by station staff.

Ahead of the official launch of the appeal, Keith Jipps, director of customer services, met staff and volunteers from the British Legion, complete with giant poppies, at St. Albans Station to drum up support.



News In Brief

FCC Driver Scoops Driver of the Year!

Gavin Lambley, a King's Cross-based driver, has been declared Driver of the Year at the RailStaff Awards 2012 for showing outstanding professionalism and capability in the line of duty. Gavin has previously received two excellence awards from First Capital Connect.

Gavin has shown great bravery in the conduct of his duty, acting to extinguishing a fire which threatened to damage signal equipment near King's Cross. In a separate incident, he was able to safely lead passengers from his damaged train near Cambridge. His cool and collected behaviour ensured that passengers were able to make it to a station safely and prevented severe damage to overhead lines.

Coming Over Clearly

Public address systems used at Bedford, St. Albans, West Hampstead, St. Pancras, Farringdon, London Blackfriars, Stevenage and Finsbury Park Stations have received a major software upgrade to improve their clarity. This upgrade has removed an echo effect which was caused by the previous software

Shift Manager's Service Recognised

Ian Bateman, shift fleet manager at Hornsey depot, was highly commended, in the category Depot Staff of the Year at the RailStaff Awards 2012, in recognition of his commitment to his train maintenance colleagues throughout his career. Ian, who retired in August, was "exceptionally dedicated and worked extremely hard to meet any challenge he faced," said depot manager Terry Warner.

What Do You Want To Know?

At First Capital Connect, we know that our customers and stakeholders don't like to be left without information. That's why we're always looking to improve the way we engage with you.

To ensure Stakeholder News is as useful to you as possible, we want to know what you would like more information about. Profiles of staff, information about day-to-day issues and more information about how we deal with problems on the network are all features we're hoping to introduce in the near future.

So let us know what you want to see; email comments to Seumas.Skinner@firstgroup.com.