



Dear Friend

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A quick update from APTU as we have our annual meeting next week – this will be with Thameslink, East Midlands Railway and Network Rail Senior Management **on Tuesday 30 November at 7:30pm on Zoom** (to end no later than 9pm) – a joint meeting of APTU and the Bedford Commuters Association. This year we again have very senior representatives from all three companies; the railway ‘leads’ are as follows:

Thameslink	Tom Moran: MD, Thameslink & Great Northern
East Midlands Railway	Will Rogers: Managing Director, East Midlands Railway
Network Rail	Gary Walsh: Route Director East Midlands

As it will, again, be a virtual session, we are going to avoid presentations as much as possible and so we are, again, going to run it in the format of a Question and Answer session. Arthur Taylor (BCA Chair) and Neil Middleton (APTU Chair) will start Tom, Will & Gary off with a selection of scene setting questions and then we will follow this with specific member questions provided in advance (and probably blended from a number of sources) and have time for some on the night questions.

To both help us decide on the scene setting questions and the specific issues that are of interest to you, please send your questions through to [Neil Middleton](#) at APTU by no later than mid-day Thursday 25 November (although earlier will be much appreciated).

In terms of the meeting’s practicalities, it will be held as a **Zoom session**; to help manage licences et al, we are pre-registering attendees:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZwpf-6grD8rH9yLFOvRg6OAYyRGCecgvwRu> (or if, typing manually: bit.ly/AptuBca2021).

Once registered, you will receive a personalised link to join the session on the evening and the opportunity to download a Calendar file for Outlook et al if that is relevant to you.

As the meeting is virtual, we do not have the need to limit numbers in the same way, so do let anyone you know might have an interest about this Webinar.

Practicalities of travel at present

Timetable change

The timetable changes from Sunday 12 December; for us, there are some improvements & changes for the Peak as follows:

- Fast services:
 - Morning: The last “Thameslink Express” changes and becomes a service that calls at Flitwick & Harpenden as well as Bedford, Luton (Town) and St Albans.
 - In the evening, there is an increase in one in the services around 6pm from St Pancras.
- Slower services:
 - Peak time services between Luton & Orpington will increase to every 30 minutes, so semi-fast services will increase at Luton, Luton Airport Parkway, Harpenden, St Albans City, Radlett, Elstree &



Borehamwood, Mill Hill Broadway and West Hampstead Thameslink, with an additional two departures per hour during busy times.

Engineering works

There will not be a blockade this Christmas / New Year, but there will be a noticeably reduced service, due to track works in the Kentish Town area (for the curious, the last of the 'slab track' (where concrete is used as the base) is being replaced with track on the normal ballast).

The main description I have is "Reduced MML frequencies between Saturday 18 and Sunday 19 December and Monday 27 December and Monday 3 January"; from what I can see on Realtime Trains that means – typically – 4 fast trains per hour, and 2 slow trains, with, at times, no EMR services south of Luton. Other than knowing there will be a service, I recommend checking back much nearer the time for exact timings.

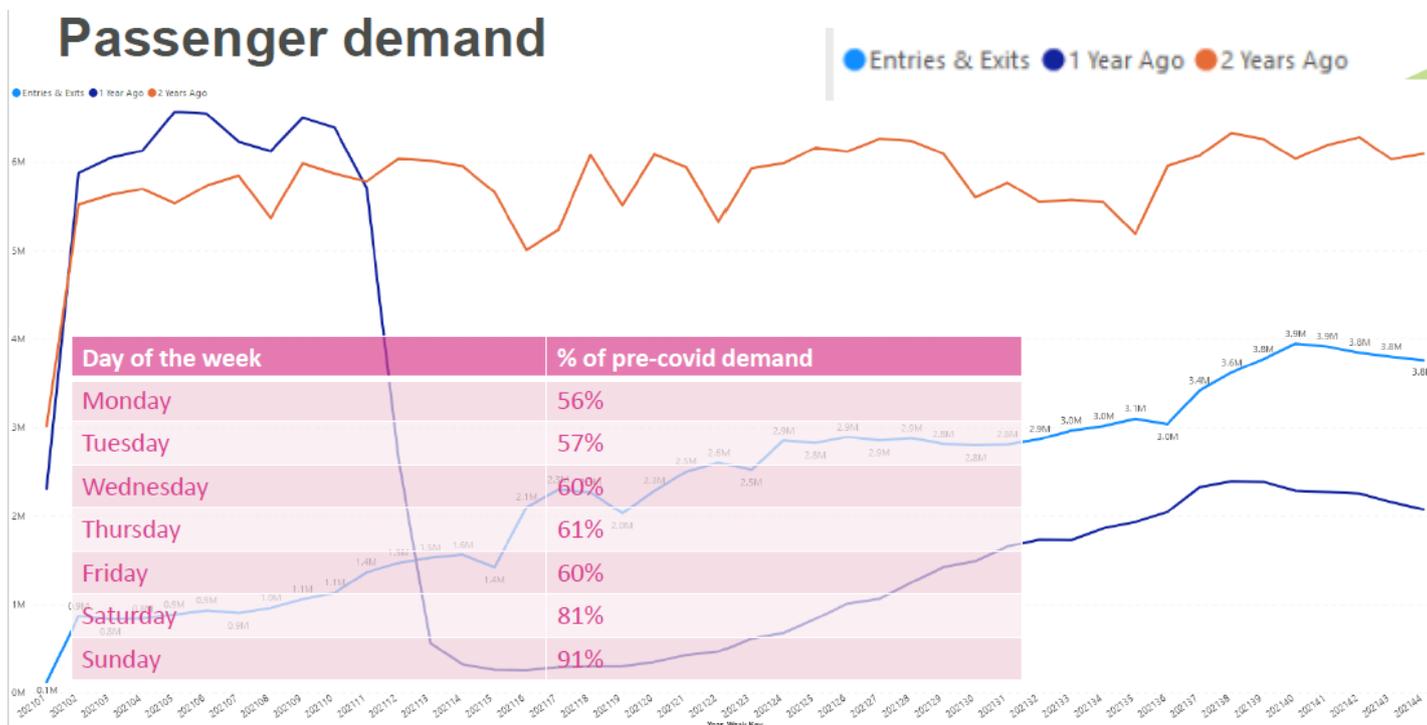
The [Press Release that briefs](#) on the closures states that the last day of service reductions will be Tuesday 4 January (although train planners [which show reductions between Christmas & New Year] suggest this will be a normal day. It sounds to that if you can plan to work at home on Tuesday 4 January, that might be a good move.

There are no services on Thameslink North on Boxing Day.

Finally, to note that there are no services from Three Bridges to Brighton between 19 & 27 February 2022. Timetables aren't available, yet, but I would not expect substantial change to our services.

Current passenger levels

GTR's webinar for the December timetable included these two slides:

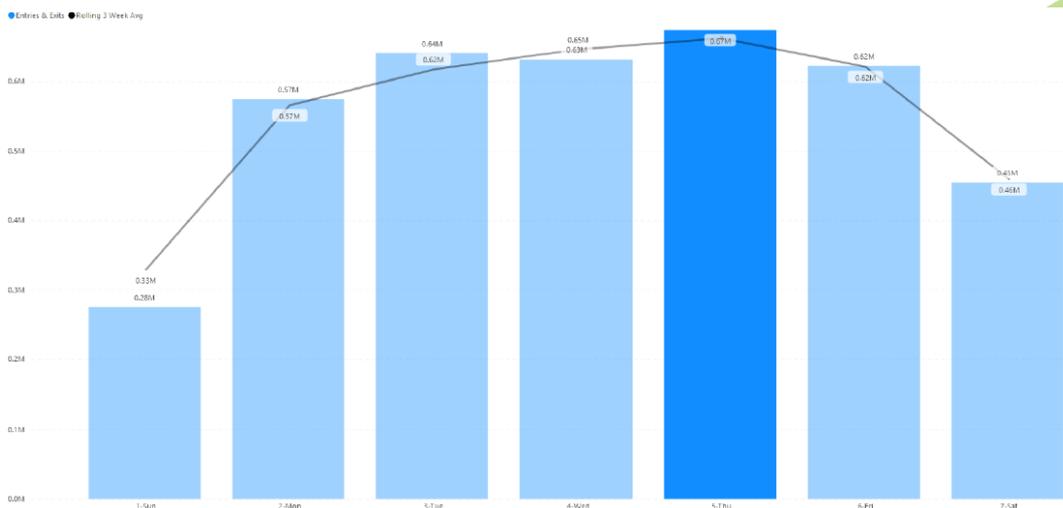




To me, there are some key observations:

- The lower, in proportion, return to the railway for Monday to Friday passengers is almost certainly also a lack of commuting and associated peak fare income for the railway, which is a key factor in all the cost pressures

The new working week



that the railway currently faces.

- To me, at least, it was a surprise that Monday traffic is lower than Friday traffic – but it is also of note that every weekday is now larger in passenger numbers than Saturdays or Sundays.

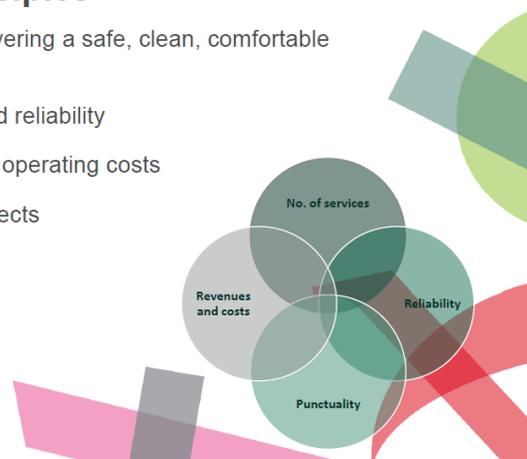
The full presentation is available here: http://aptu.org.uk/pdfs/gtr_timetable_dec2021_forum.pdf.

Other items from the webinar

These two slides from the webinar are worth a moment:

Service planning principles

1. Resilient, reliable network – delivering a safe, clean, comfortable railway for customers
2. Balance punctuality, capacity and reliability
3. Support demand growth, control operating costs
4. Support major improvement projects
5. Flexible



Managing the effects of coronavirus



Regards

Neil

Neil Middleton

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