

**THIS ITEM IS FOR INFORMATION ONLY**

**(Please note that "Information Only" reports do not require Integrated Impact Assessments, Legal or Finance Comments as no decision is being taken)**

<b>Title of meeting:</b>	Cabinet Member for Transport decision meeting
<b>Subject:</b>	Southern Rail West Coastway timetable
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	20 March 2024
<b>Report by:</b>	Felicity Tidbury, Assistant Director Economy, Planning and Transport
<b>Report author:</b>	Richard Pemberton, Transport Strategy Team Leader
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Councillor Gerald Vernon-Jackson, Cabinet member for Transport
<b>Wards affected:</b>	All

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**1. Requested by**

1.1. This report was requested by the Cabinet Member for Transport.

**2. Purpose**

2.1. The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the Southern Rail West Coastway timetable following completion of the consultation period.

**3. Information Requested**

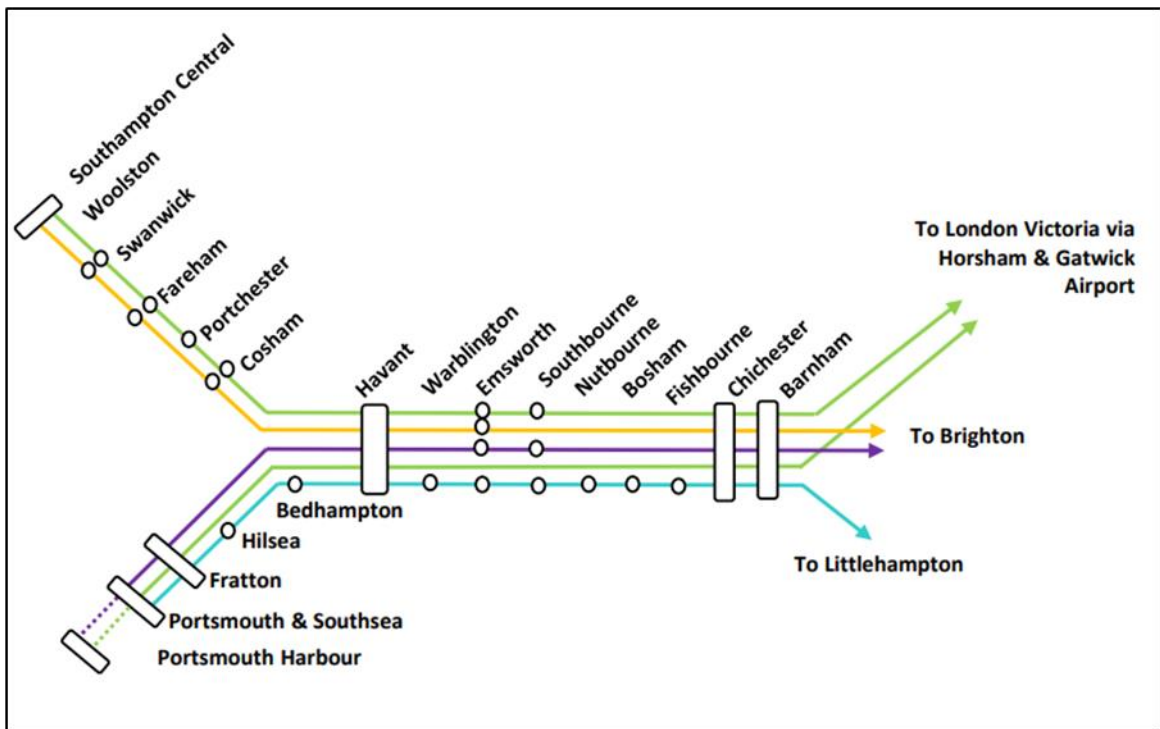
3.1. The train operator Govia Thameslink Railway, trading as Southern Railway, provides passenger services on the West Coastway routes which connect Portsmouth, Southampton and Havant with Littlehampton, Brighton, Gatwick Airport and London Victoria. Current routes are;

- Portsmouth - Chichester - Littlehampton
- Portsmouth - Chichester - Brighton
- Portsmouth - Chichester - Gatwick Airport - London Victoria
- Southampton - Cosham - Chichester - Brighton
- Southampton - Cosham - Chichester - Gatwick Airport - London Victoria

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3.2. A schematic diagram of the current service pattern is shown in Figure 1 below. Each line represents one train per hour.



**Figure 1: Current West Coastway services**

- 3.3. Whilst providing much needed east-west connectivity this timetable does have some disadvantages.
- 3.4. The services to Portsmouth and Southampton are not evenly spaced. For example, at Cosham there are intervals of 15 and 45 minutes between trains every hour to Southampton or Chichester. This arises from one train going to Brighton and the other to London Victoria.
- 3.5. The services from Brighton and London to Portsmouth/Southampton currently suffer from poor punctuality and reliability. This is partly due to the short turnaround times allowed at Portsmouth and Southampton. This has resulted in many late-running trains being terminated short of their destinations, usually at Fratton or Fareham forcing passengers to change trains to complete their journey.
- 3.6. Most Portsmouth services terminate at Portsmouth & Southsea. Portsmouth Harbour is served infrequently, which reduces connectivity to the visitor attractions of Gunwharf Quays and the Historic Dockyard, and to the ferry services to Gosport and the Isle of Wight.

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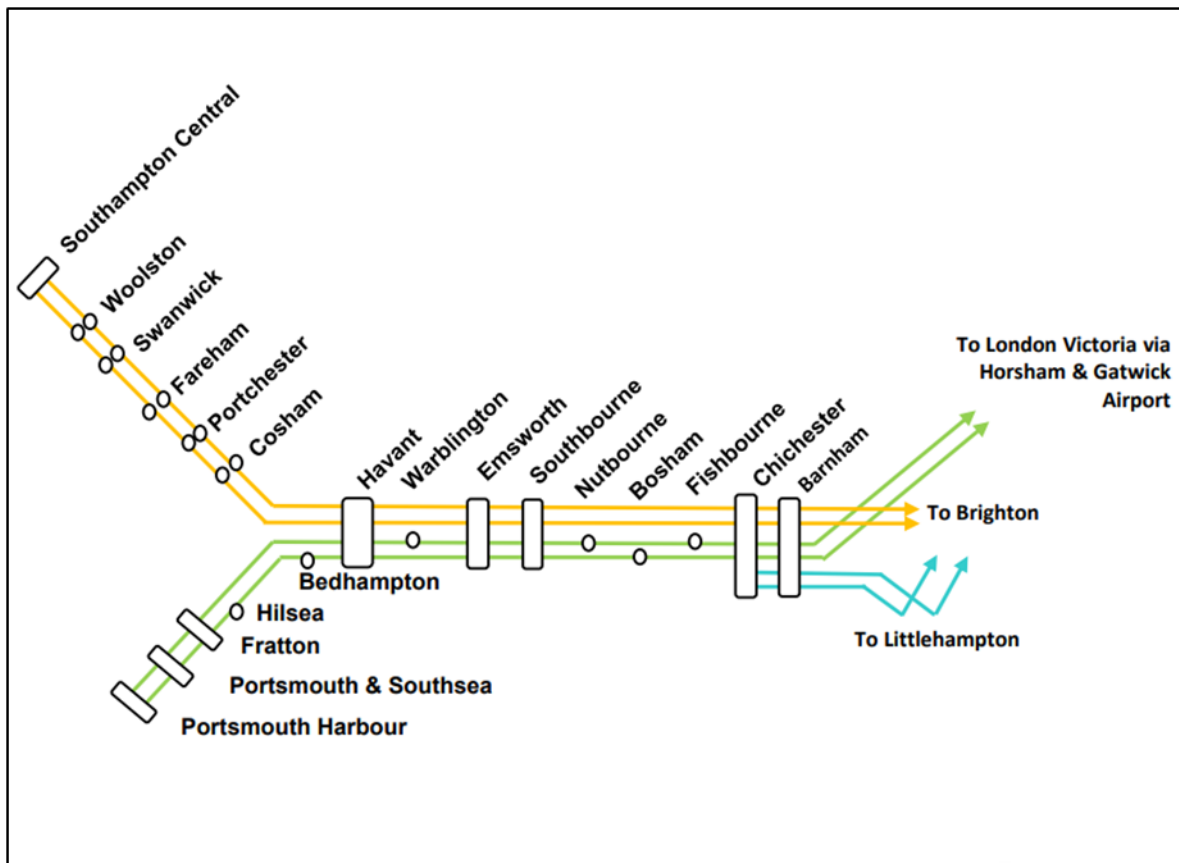
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3.7. An information report to the Cabinet Member of Transport 18<sup>th</sup> August 2023 outlined Portsmouth City Council’s response to the West Coastway timetable consultation.

3.8. The initially proposed changes included the following:

- Withdrawal of the Portsmouth – Littlehampton all stations hourly service;
- A Portsmouth Harbour – Gatwick Airport – London Victoria service every 30 minutes also calling at Hilsea; and
- A Southampton – Brighton service calling at Cosham and Havant every 30 minutes.

3.9. A schematic diagram of the original 2023 timetable proposal is shown in Figure 2 below.



**Figure 2 Originally proposed West Coastway changes**

3.10. This provided an even interval 30-minute service on both the Portsmouth and Southampton legs and extended all trains to Portsmouth Harbour including additional recovery time.

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3.11. However, there were also found to be some disadvantages to the proposals which were detailed in the council's consultation response;

- Longer travel times between Portsmouth – Gatwick Airport due to trains calling at local stations between Havant and Chichester, causing travel times to exceed those possible by car; and
- Loss of long-established direct Portsmouth – Brighton trains resulting in increased travel times as passengers would need to change at Chichester, again becoming longer than those possible by car.

3.12. These issues would be partly offset by the increased frequency of Portsmouth – Gatwick Airport trains and their running through to Portsmouth Harbour.

3.13. Following the completion of the consultation, Southern Railway have published the results on their website; [Southern - West Coastway timetable changes \(southernrailway.com\)](https://www.southernrailway.com)

3.14. Southern Railway have revised their planned services based on consultation responses from 460 stakeholders, including the City Council for services to be introduced on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2024.

3.15. The planned service includes the following amendments which largely address the Council's concerns:

- An hourly Portsmouth & Southsea – Brighton direct service will continue;
- Portsmouth Harbour – Gatwick Airport – London Victoria services approximately every 30 minutes;
- One of the Portsmouth Harbour – London Victoria services will call at all stations between Havant and Chichester while the other will call at Emsworth and Southbourne only, to maintain the previous journey times; and
- Southampton – Cosham – Havant – Brighton services every 30 minutes.

3.16. Only limited Southern Railway services will call at Bedhampton. However, services to this station will continue to be provided by South Western Railway which are within a few minutes of the previous Southern trains.

3.17. A schematic diagram of the West Coastway timetable planned for June 2024 is shown in Figure 3.

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**Figure 3 – Post consultation final West Coastway services from June 2024**

3.18. The 2024 West Coastway timetable will have the following impacts on passengers travelling to/from Portsmouth:

- An hourly direct service from Portsmouth & Southsea to Brighton is retained;
- An hourly fast service from Portsmouth & Southsea to Chichester, running non-stop from Havant is retained;
- A Portsmouth Harbour – Gatwick Airport – London Victoria service approximately every 30 minutes, with one service each hour being 6 minutes faster than the other, keeping journey times to Gatwick competitive with car travel;
- More services calling at Hilsea where passenger numbers are growing with increased employment at local businesses;
- A Southampton – Cosham – Havant – Brighton service at regular 30-minute intervals; and
- Improved service reliability across the route due to a more resilient service plan.

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Signed by (Director)

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**Appendices:**

**Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972**

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

<b>Title of document</b>	<b>Location</b>
Cabinet Member for Transport, Friday 18 <sup>th</sup> August 2023, Supplementary Agenda, Details of Council response to Southern Railway West Coastway timetable consultation 2023 p90-92.	<a href="#">(Public Pack)Supplementary papers Agenda Supplement for Cabinet Member for Transport, 18/08/2023 10:00 (portsmouth.gov.uk)</a>
West Coastway Engagement Summary	<a href="#">West Coastway Engagement Document.pdf</a>
Southern Railway press release	<a href="#">Southern - West Coastway timetable changes (southernrailway.com)</a>