



Department
for Transport

Rt Hon Nick Herbert MP
House of Commons
London
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From the Minister of State
and Minister for London
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14 JUN 2018

15 JUN 2018

Dear Nick,

Thank you for meeting with me on 22 May, and for raising the concerns of your constituents regarding journeys from Hassocks to Clapham Junction.

As we discussed, Govia Thameslink Railway (who run Thameslink, Southern and Gatwick Express services from your constituency) have removed direct train services from Hassocks to Clapham Junction. It may be helpful if I explain the reasons for this decision.

One of the major reasons for disruption on this part of the network was trains and train crew travelling on different lines which meant that disruption, when it occurred, could spread rapidly across the network. The new timetable avoids this where possible. As a result, Hassocks now receives a consistent four Gatwick Express trains per hour on the route from Brighton to Victoria during the peak, and two Southern trains per hour from Littlehampton during the off-peak. Previously Hassocks was served by a combination of Southern and Gatwick Express services coming from Brighton or Littlehampton at all times.

The Gatwick Express services which serve Hassocks in the peak periods cannot call at Clapham Junction as these services are required to travel without stops from Gatwick Airport to Victoria. You raised the example of Stansted Express services, which stop at Tottenham Hale. The difference between the two is that Tottenham Hale provides a crucial interchange with the Victoria line and there is no alternative option to travel to Tottenham Hale from Stansted. For passengers at Gatwick, there are regular Southern trains to Clapham Junction.

I agree with you that the removal of direct services to Clapham Junction is not ideal for Hassocks passengers who travel to Clapham Junction. However, by changing at Gatwick Airport, those passengers are able to reach Clapham Junction without a significant increase in journey time. I have attached the journey time comparisons for the equivalent services today, which may be helpful for your constituents. As you can see, there are two morning peak

journeys that are faster and two that are slower. In the evening peak, just one journey is more than two minutes slower, and that is a direct service.

However, National Rail set minimum interchange times for passengers to change trains, which are then built into journey planners. At Gatwick the minimum recommended interchange for Southern services is 10 minutes, compared to 5 minutes at East Croydon and 3 minutes at Haywards Heath. While some passengers may be able to change trains at Gatwick in 4 minutes, I have also suggested alternative trains below which do allow for the recommended minimum interchange time.

I would also like to emphasise that the vast majority of passengers travelling from Hassocks to London have been served well by this timetable change. Our data shows that only a very small proportion of weekday journeys from Hassocks to London go via Clapham Junction, with the vast majority going to Victoria or on Thameslink services.

For those travelling to and from Victoria there are now 5 additional services during the morning peak (12 rather than 7), and 1 additional service in the evening peak (10 rather than 9). The average journey time for this route is now 51 minutes compared to the previous average journey time of 61 minutes (morning) and 55 minutes (evening). Every peak service on this route is run with modern class 387 trains, fitted with WiFi, air conditioning and charging points.

Hassocks to London Bridge commuters receive 6 services to London Bridge, in the morning and evening, which is the same as previously. The average journey time for these services is now five minutes shorter. In addition, from December 2018, there will be an additional service each hour on this route. All of these services stop at Blackfriars, City Thameslink, Farringdon and St Pancras International, before continuing to Bedford or Cambridge. This much improved connectivity will mean that many commuters no longer need to change onto the London Underground to complete their journey. The opening of the Elizabeth Line through Farringdon in December will offer further journey opportunities.

I hope this reply is helpful.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Yours, J". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

JO JOHNSON

Direct Hassocks to Clapham Junction alternatives

Previous direct services to Clapham Junction from Hassocks	Arrival time	Equivalent departure today	Arrival time	Journey time comparison	Interchange time at Gatwick Airport
06:23	07:25	06:38	07:28	12 min faster	5 min
07:29	08:17	07:23	08:17	6 min slower	9 min
08:19	09:09	08:23	09:18	5 min slower	10 min
09:03	09:52	09:07	09:52	4 min faster	5 min
Previous direct services to Hassocks from Clapham Junction	Arrival time	Equivalent departure today	Arrival time	Journey time comparison	Interchange time at Gatwick Airport
16:26	17:09	16:32	17:21	6 min slower	DIRECT
17:12	17:58	17:13	18:00	1 min slower	4 min
17:24	18:12	17:32	18:22	2 min slower	4 min
17:52	18:45	18:02	18:52	3 min faster	7 min
18:23	19:12	18:32	19:22	1 min slower	4 min
18:53	19:48	19:02	19:52	5 min faster	4 min

Direct Hassocks to Clapham Junction alternatives (allowing for 10 minutes interchange at Gatwick Airport)

Previous direct services to Clapham Junction from Hassocks	Arrival time	Equivalent departure today	Arrival time	Journey time comparison	Interchange time	Interchange station
06:23	07:25	06:38	07:28	12 min faster	3 min	Haywards Heath
07:29	08:17	07:29	08:27	10 min slower	5 min	East Croydon
08:19	09:09	08:23	09:18	5 min slower	10 min	Gatwick Airport
09:03	09:52	08:53	09:52	10 min slower	17 min	Gatwick Airport
Previous direct services to Hassocks from Clapham Junction	Arrival time	Equivalent departure today	Arrival time	Journey time comparison	Interchange time	Interchange station
16:26	17:09	16:32	17:21	6 min slower	DIRECT	
17:12	17:58	17:13	18:09	10 min slower	7 min	East Croydon
17:24	18:12	17:32	18:22	2 min slower	5 min	Haywards Heath
17:52	18:45	18:02	18:52	3 min faster	6 min	Haywards Heath
18:23	19:12	18:32	19:22	1 min slower	5 min	Haywards Heath
18:53	19:48	19:02	19:52	5 min faster	5 min	Haywards Heath