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17<sup>th</sup> October 2017

Dear Sir/Madam,

### **Surrey Heath Borough Council's response to South Western Railway Timetable Consultation for December 2018**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Timetable Consultation for December 2018. This letter is the Council's formal response.

Surrey Heath Borough Council has had the opportunity to consider proposals and has the following comments to make.

Camberley is a dynamic and progressive 'step up' town in the heart of one of the most affluent parts of the UK. Delivering improvements to Camberley Town Centre is a key priority for the Borough, as identified in the Council's Five Year Strategy. As a result, it is essential that Camberley is serviced with sustainable rail connections.

#### **Services from Camberley**

##### **Services from Camberley to London Waterloo**

With regard to proposed changes to the service from Camberley to London Waterloo, the Council generally welcomes the improved connections at Ash Vale which will reduce journey times by 10 minutes or more. However, we would emphasise that train operators need to ensure that there is minimum disruption to services to enable passengers to make the connection, which is limited at five minutes. Due to the need to change platforms at Ash Vale, the Council raises concerns for passengers with disabilities, for whom changing platforms may take longer than other passengers. Moreover, the Council highlights that with the new emphasis on travelling via Ash Vale, there is an even greater need for station improvements, including provisions for disabled access and improved facilities at the station. The Council welcomes the decrease in wait time at Camberley for services to London Waterloo, with more journey alternatives being provided. The Council recommends suitable advertising of the improved journey times on this service to ensure customers are aware.

The Council objects to the discontinuation of all direct train services from Camberley to London Waterloo, representing a reduction over current service levels. We note that some commuters

already travel to stations outside the Borough in order to access direct trains to London Waterloo. The discontinuation of direct services from Camberley to London Waterloo will exacerbate this issue and result in an increase in congestion within the Borough. If capacity allows in future, the Council would hope for the reinstatement of through trains on the Ascot line. The Council notes that despite the improvement of the service from Ascot to London Waterloo, there is no change in the journey time from Camberley to London Waterloo travelling via Ascot.

### **Services from Camberley to Guildford**

With regard to proposed changes to the service from Camberley to Guildford, the Council welcomes the 12 minute reduction in journey time. However, we would emphasise that train operators need to ensure that there is minimum disruption to services to enable passengers to make the connection, which is limited at 4 minutes. At present, passengers travelling from Camberley to Guildford benefit from a direct service. The Council welcomes the earlier start time and later end time to the service from Camberley to Guildford.

### **Services to Camberley**

#### **Services from London Waterloo to Camberley**

With regard to the proposed changes to the service from London Waterloo, the Council generally welcomes the improved connections at Ash Vale and the reduction in journey time of 20 minutes. However, we would emphasise that train operators need to ensure that there is minimum disruption to services to enable passengers to make the connection, which is limited at 6 minutes.

The Council objects to the discontinuation of direct services from London Waterloo to Camberley, representing a reduction over current service levels. We note that some commuters already travel to stations outside the Borough in order to access direct trains to and from London Waterloo. The discontinuation of direct services from London Waterloo to Camberley will exacerbate this issue and result in an increase in congestion within the Borough. The council notes that despite the improvement to services from London Waterloo to Ascot, there is only a minor improvement to journey time. We raise concerns over the 3 minute transfer time at Ascot, which may not give passengers enough time to make their connecting journey. The Council notes that despite the increase in trains passing through the Sunningdale crossing, there will not be an increase in the frequency of the barriers across the A30 London Road coming down.

#### **Services from Guildford to Camberley**

With regard to the changes to the service from Guildford to Camberley, the Council objects to the proposals. The proposed indirect service will take longer than the present direct service and would include a longer wait at Aldershot. Therefore, no benefits are gained splitting the service from Guildford to Camberley for passengers travelling further than Aldershot, representing a reduction over current service levels. However, the Council does support the proposals for an earlier start time to the service.

#### **Services between Camberley and Reading**

The Council welcomes the improved connectivity between Camberley and Reading, reducing journey times between the two stations.

Yours sincerely

Cllr Moira Gibson  
Leader of the Council  
Surrey Heath Borough Council

Karen Whelan  
Chief Executive  
Surrey Heath Borough Council