



Consultation on proposed changes to Metropolitan line services at Amersham and Chesham

February 2009

Introduction

This document summarises the issues raised during the consultation on proposed changes to the Metropolitan line service at Amersham and Chesham, and sets out London Underground's (LU) responses.

Information leaflets attached to questionnaires with free return postage were distributed for four weeks in summer 2008 at Amersham and Chesham stations. Information was also available on the Transport for London website with an email address for responses.

Proposed changes

The proposal would affect users of Chesham and Amersham stations only. There would be no effect on the rest of the Metropolitan line or Chiltern Railways services.

- At Chesham, the shuttle to Chalfont & Latimer would be replaced with two trains per hour running through to/from central London. This service already operates during the peak hours, 0700-0800 and 1800-1900, and there would therefore be no change to services at these times.
- At Amersham, in order to operate through services to Chesham, it would be necessary to reduce the present four Metropolitan line trains per hour to two per hour. However there would be no change to the current service during the peak hours as through trains already operate to Chesham at these times. Chiltern Railways' two trains per hour service (one train per hour on Sundays) would be unaffected, so the total available train service outside the peak hours would be four trains per hour (three trains per hour on Sundays).

Summary of proposed changes to weekday train service to/from central London (changes highlighted):

	Current service	Proposed service
Chesham (0700-0800 and 1800-1900)	<u>No change</u> 2tph	<u>No change</u> 2tph
Chesham (other times)	None (2tph to Chalfont & Latimer only)	2tph
Amersham (0700-0800)	<u>No change</u> 2tph Met / 3tph Chiltern	<u>No change</u> 2tph Met / 3tph Chiltern
Amersham (1800-1900)	<u>No change</u> 3tph Met / 3tph Chiltern	<u>No change</u> 3tph Met / 3tph Chiltern
Amersham (other times)	4tph Met / 2tph Chiltern	2tph Met / 2tph Chiltern

Decision

LU has spent some considerable time reviewing the responses to the consultation to make sure that everyone's view was taken into account. On balance, LU believes that the proposals would be of benefit to the two towns, and is therefore minded to go ahead with the change.

It is expected that the change will be introduced in 2011, once new trains have been delivered on to the Metropolitan line.

Overview of results

A total of 818 responses were received.

- Of those who said which station they used, 47% used Chesham, 43% used Amersham and 10% used both on a regular basis.
- Of those who said where they lived (or worked, if they commute to Amersham or Chesham), 59% lived in the HP5 postcode area, 21% lived in the HP6 postcode area, 12% lived in the HP7 postcode area and 7% lived elsewhere.

Of the responses that were received 56% expressed a view broadly in favour of the proposals. 28% expressed views broadly against. 13% expressed no opinion or expressed opinions both for and against. Three percent suggested that they may not oppose the proposals if the current service at Amersham could be protected for a longer period during the morning and evening peaks.

- A majority of those using Amersham station and of those living in Amersham were against the proposal.
- A majority of those living in and of those using Chesham were in favour.
- A larger proportion of Amersham respondents expressed no opinion or mixed opinions.

Overall opinions:

	For	Against	No/mixed opinion	Maybe, if full Amersham peak protected
All respondents	56%	28%	13%	3%

Opinions by main station of use:

	For	Against	No/mixed opinion	Maybe, if full Amersham peak protected
Amersham users	20%	57%	17%	6%
Chesham users	88%	4%	8%	-
Both stations used frequently	68%	26%	6%	-

Opinions by journey starting point (mostly place of residence):

	For	Against	No/mixed opinion	Maybe, if full Amersham peak protected
HP6 and HP7 (Amersham)	14%	61%	17%	8%
HP5 (Chesham)	88%	5%	7%	-

Issues raised

A number of issues were raised, both by those in favour of and those against the proposals. The following table summarises the main issues and London Underground's (LU) responses.

Issue	Points made by Tube users	LU Responses
Introduction of through journeys between Chesham and central London	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some people found having to interchange with the shuttle at Chalfont & Latimer frustrating, particularly during the evening, as if they miss the shuttle they have to wait for up to 25 minutes. Some people said the proposal would make journeys much easier for people with mobility difficulties or travelling with luggage or pushchairs, who currently have to use the subway at Chalfont & Latimer. However, some people said having to change at Chalfont is less of an inconvenience than the reduction in frequency from Amersham would be. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LU recognises that changing at Chalfont & Latimer can be frustrating and hopes the proposal will address this, consequently improving journey experience and cutting journey times for customers using Chesham and encouraging greater use of the Tube. The change would be in line with LU's commitment to improving access to its services for those with mobility impairments, or who find travelling by Tube difficult for other reasons. LU believes that, on balance, the proposal will provide the best possible service across the two towns.
Reduction in frequency from Amersham outside peak hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some people felt that the change could lead to further crowding on already busy services; they said there has been an increase in the number of people travelling to/from Amersham in recent years. There were concerns from some people about having to wait longer for trains. Some people said that reducing train frequency would discourage public transport use. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> While the number of people using Amersham has increased, there is still spare capacity on most trains leaving Amersham, and service frequency south from Chalfont & Latimer will be unchanged. Additionally, it is anticipated that some customers currently using Amersham will choose to travel from Chesham instead, reducing demand. It is recognised that waiting times will increase slightly for some Amersham users, but the proposals will result in a significantly more convenient service for Chesham users, and also time savings as they no longer have to wait for connecting trains at Chalfont & Latimer. LU believes that Amersham will still have a sufficiently frequent train service for this not to be the case.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some users of Amersham said that they felt that the benefit to Chesham users would exceed the disadvantages to Amersham users, and therefore that the proposal should proceed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LU's aim is to provide the best possible service across the two towns, and believes that the proposal will achieve this.
Travel between the two towns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some people said they currently drive from Chesham to other Metropolitan line stations to catch the train. An improved Tube service from Chesham would reduce this, cutting road congestion and pollution. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LU believes that an improved service from Chesham will encourage more residents to choose the Tube over private cars. By reducing the number of people that drive to Amersham, the proposal will also reduce the demand on services from that station.
Other effects on the two towns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There was a feeling from some people that the change would make things fairer between the two towns. Some people said the change would attract more people and businesses to Chesham. Some people noted that Chesham has a higher population than Amersham, yet a lower train service. Some people said that Amersham is a local transport hub, and it is better to keep as many services as possible at one location. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LU believes that the change will improve the service at Chesham and that the advantages will outweigh the disadvantages to Amersham. There are a number of factors behind LU's decision, although the economic benefit to Chesham is not the most important of those. There are number of factors behind LU's decision, although population is not the most important of those. LU believes that Amersham can retain its status as a local transport hub while also improving the service to Chesham.
Station facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some people said that car parking and other facilities are better at Amersham. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LU believes the facilities at Chesham will be adequate for the demand placed on them.
Chiltern Railways services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some people said the Chiltern service from Amersham is more popular than the Metropolitan line. Some people noted that Chiltern trains serve different destinations than the Metropolitan line. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research shows that one of the most important factors to customers is overall journey time. LU believes the proposals will achieve the best journey time for all customers across the two branches, including the Chiltern services. A small number of stations are served by only Chiltern or Metropolitan line services, however all destinations will continue to have a direct service from Amersham.
Fares	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some people said that if the service is reduced at Amersham, fares should be reduced as well. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fares are set by the Mayor of London and are not under LU's control. However Amersham will still have a regular train service and there will be no increase in journey time and LU does not therefore believe there is a case for reviewing fares.
Future of Chesham branch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some people said the change would help to ensure the ongoing operation of the Chesham branch, which has been threatened with closure in the past. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LU is committed to the continued operation of the Chesham branch.

<p>Consultation process</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some people who live further down the line towards London felt that they too should have been targeted by the consultation. • Some people did not agree with the definition of peak hours (0700-0800 and 1800-1900) given in the leaflet. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Users of other Metropolitan line stations were not targeted by the consultation as they will not be affected. However, all responses received were taken into account. • The peak hours stated in the consultation are the periods when through trains already operate between Chesham and central London, and during which it will not be necessary to change the service that currently operates to Amersham. These two peak hours already have a lower Metropolitan line frequency than other times of day because services are diverted to operate to/from Chesham at these times.
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A number of alternatives to the proposal were suggested:

Alternative suggestion	LU response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operate one train from Chesham to London each hour, using the shuttle for the other service. Reduce Amersham frequency by only one train per hour. • Maintain the current Amersham service frequency for the whole of each three-hour peak period (not just the two peak hours), but make changes at other times of day. • Maintain the frequency from Amersham by operating a shuttle service to Chalfont & Latimer, Rickmansworth or Watford. • Increase the frequency of the current shuttle service. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This proposal would not provide as much benefit across the two towns as the preferred option. It would be complex to operate and could be confusing for customers. • Many people travel from/to Chesham during the hours 0700-0800, 0900-1000, 1700-1800 and 1900-2000 and if through services were not implemented in these periods they would not benefit from the proposal. • It is unlikely that the cost of operating a shuttle of this type would be justified by the level of demand there would be for it. • Increasing the frequency of the shuttle service would mean more than one train using the line at the same time, which is not possible because it has only one track.

Further information

Further information is available from London Underground Customer Services at 55 Broadway, London, SW1H 0BD.