



London Underground plans for changes to District line services Working Timetable 12 (WTT12) 11 December 2011

Overview

- **The weekday service to Kensington (Olympia) will be withdrawn on 11 December following an increase in Overground service to the station in May**
- **The primary reason for this change is to relieve a bottleneck in the Earl's Court area, the source of many of the delays on the line.**
- **It will also allow London Underground (LU) to boost peak services for the busiest sections of the District line**

Proposal

To improve the reliability of the District line LU proposes to introduce a new timetable on 11 December 2011 to deal with the issues associated with a bottleneck in the Earl's Court area, the source of many of the delays on the line.

To simplify the service and reduce delays, LU proposes to remove weekday services to Kensington (Olympia), which currently carry less than half a percent of District line passengers but account for almost 10% of the trains through Earl's Court. This change would improve the service for everyone else who uses the District line.

It would also enable LU to improve peak services on the most overcrowded section of the line, the Wimbledon branch, which carries 28% of passengers through Earl's Court. An additional evening peak train to Ealing Broadway will also be provided.

The Olympia service will still operate during the weekend, and LU plans to operate special services to serve major weekday events at the Olympia exhibition centre. London Overground services to Kensington (Olympia) will increase to four tph all day from May.

Issues

- **Passengers travelling to and from Kensington (Olympia) on weekdays will have to use alternative routes, but most alternatives involve little extra time.**
- **There will be fewer trains between Earl's Court and High Street Kensington. However, this reduction will have only a marginal effect because 91% of customers make that journey on Wimbledon to Edgware Road trains, the frequency of which will not change and the reliability of which will be improved by the withdrawal of Kensington (Olympia) services.**

DETAIL

Benefits to District line passengers

The track layout at Earl's Court is congested with a very high number of conflicting train movements which has a negative effect on the reliability of the rest of the District line.

Removal of the Kensington (Olympia) service allows a more straight-forward scheduling of services through Earl's Court and High Street Kensington, thus improving reliability.

Improved reliability is the main benefit of the proposal and the reason it is being considered, however removal of the Kensington (Olympia) service also frees up one District line train which can be used to provide additional capacity at peak times.

In the morning peak (07:00-10:00) LU will provide five more trains from the Wimbledon branch, the most crowded route through Earl's Court, as this gives the greatest benefit.

Currently there are 41 trains arriving at Earl's Court from Wimbledon between 07:00 and 10:00. From December 11 there will be 46, a 12% increase: There will be 16 trains in the first hour (+2), 15 in the middle hour (no change) and 15 in the last hour (+3).

LU will also increase the frequency of direct City to Wimbledon trains between 22:00 and 23:00 and then continue to run a City-Wimbledon service until the close of traffic.

In the evening peak LU will provide an additional service to Ealing Broadway timed to run through Victoria at the busiest time, between 1745-1800. The train frequency to Ealing at this time will rise from 6tph to 7tph, a 16.6% increase in capacity.

Demand at Kensington (Olympia)

There are just over 2300 London Underground passenger journeys to and from Kensington (Olympia) each weekday. By comparison there are 153,500 passenger journeys to and from the Wimbledon branch and over 700,000 passenger journeys on the District line as a whole.

There are, on average under 30 people per weekday Kensington (Olympia) train.

Kensington (Olympia) trains account for almost 10% of train movements through Earl's Court (District), but less than half a percent of total District line passengers.

There are only five stations (Roding Valley, Chigwell, Grange Hill, Theydon Bois and Chesham) with lower weekday demand than Kensington (Olympia), but they have no alternative rail services.

Kensington (Olympia) is also served by London Overground (LO) and Southern Trains at a higher frequency than the LU service: up to 6 tph in the peak and 3 tph off-peak, increasing in May this year to up to 7 tph peak and 5 tph off-peak.

Southern and LO services interchange with LU at Shepherd's Bush and West Brompton.

The residential catchment area for Kensington (Olympia) is small and well served by adjacent stations Shepherd's Bush, West Kensington, Hammersmith and Barons Court.

Some Kensington (Olympia) passengers will experience no loss of service because their journey time won't be extended by the withdrawal of the Kensington (Olympia) service. Apart from journeys to Earl's Court and High Street Kensington, all other journeys from Kensington (Olympia) require an interchange to access the rest of the Underground network.

Only a Kensington (Olympia) to Piccadilly Line journey is distinctly more straightforward on the LU shuttle service to Earl's Court. Even then passengers, especially those accessing the station from points to the south have the alternative of walking (11 minutes) to Baron's Court station where they may join the Piccadilly without interchange.

Passengers from Kensington (Olympia) have an average platform wait time of 10 minutes and if their destination is anywhere other than Earl's Court or High Street Kensington they have to interchange at Earl's Court as well. This means that for virtually any destination it is faster to board either the Overground service at Kensington (Olympia) or other LU services at Earl's Court, High Street Kensington or Shepherd's Bush, all of which are within a mile of Kensington (Olympia).

Exhibition Traffic

Olympia events do cause demand spikes, but the main flow of exhibition passengers is at the weekends, and weekend services are unaffected by this proposed change.

The existing three tph Kensington Olympia service is not ideally suited to events with 'hard finishes' where many passengers already use or could easily use alternative routes to and from exhibitions.

Some passengers would save time by walking the 11 minutes to Barons Court rather than wait up to 20 minutes for a train at Kensington (Olympia) to Earl's Court.

LU plans to operate special services to serve major weekday events at the Olympia exhibition centre.