

**Rail for Herefordshire, PO Box 299, Hereford, HR1 2YE**  
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Ms Glenda Lamont  
Director, Commercial Services  
First Great Western and First Great Western Link  
Milford House, 1 Milford Street, Swindon, SN1 1HL

1<sup>st</sup> March 2006

Dear Ms Lamont

Thank you for sending the Draft December 2006 FGW timetable for consultation. There are a few important changes that should be made.

**(1) London to Swansea timetabling fails to take into account Hereford-Manchester connection**

Regarding the London-Reading-Bristol Parkway-Newport-Swansea route:

**1.1** The **20.15 depart Paddington** arrives 22.09 Newport; The Cardiff-Newport-Hereford-Manchester connexion departs Newport at 22.08. This means passengers have to wait for over an hour for a connecting service to Hereford and Manchester. Can this be corrected so that the connection meets that running to Hereford / Manchester?

**1.2** The last train to Hereford via Newport is now 21.15. It used to be 22.00 which was better, with less of a wait at Newport. Can a later train be re-instated? The 21.15 arrives Newport 23.09, the connexion is 00.44 meaning 1 hr 35 min wait on a station in the middle of the night. If a later train was re-instated this long wait would no longer be necessary.

**(2) Hereford to London through trains are slower, and necessitate getting to Hereford Station much earlier in the morning**

<b>CURRENT (VIA WORCESTER):</b>				
<b>Hereford</b>	<b>Paddington</b>	<b>Duration</b>	<b>Average Speed*</b>	<b>Return Fare</b>
05.45	08.42	2 hrs 57 mins	50.1 mph	£56 standard
06.52	09.44	2 hrs 52 mins	52.3 mph	£39 saver

  

<b>PLANNED (2006) (VIA WORCESTER):</b>				
<b>Hereford</b>	<b>Paddington</b>	<b>Duration</b>	<b>Average Speed*</b>	<b>Return Fare</b>
05.44	08.37	2 hrs 53 mins	52.1 mph	£56 standard
<b>06.30</b>	09.36	<b>3 hrs 06 mins</b>	<b>49.8 mph</b>	£39 saver?

\*Hereford is 150 miles from London Paddington by rail

Whilst the 05.45 is a slight improvement, the 06.30 shows a drop in performance. There is one additional (and, in our view unnecessary) stop at Didcot on the service. In our opinion, FGW should not make too much 'heavy weather' out of DfT's requirements –these are not set in stone. Rather, they are flexible. Hereford customers would also welcome a later return train from London (e.g. post 22.00), via either the Newport or the Evesham route. Thank-you again for consulting with us. Finally, we are also copying this letter to Rail Focus.

Yours sincerely

**Gerald Dawe**  
Chair, Rail for Herefordshire + FGW Customer Champion (Hereford-Worcester area)