Written evidence submitted by Mrs Harriet Harrison (RTC0009)

Route:

- Harpenden – St Pancras – Harpenden
- Harpenden – West Hampstead Thameslink – Harpenden

I am a season ticket holder and commute into London four days a week. I am a Mum to 2 primary school-aged children and have lived in Harpenden since 2008. I have been doing this journey since then. I employ a nanny and need to get back every night in order to relieve her of her duties and to make sure she only has to work her contracted hours. If I am late back (often) then I am personally out of pocket as I have to pay her extra for the overtime she is forced to work.

Harpenden have had their peak trains cut by over a third since the 20th May. This has lead to over-crowding on every train going into London. Harpenden is a busy commuter town with a vast number of season ticket holders. We are now experiencing crammed train journeys, lengthy delays and appalling conditions. People pass out daily in carriages that are so packed they are dangerous, hot and stuffy.

The timetable change has impacted me personally due to the above reasons and I have been late for work on many occasions due to the reduction in our service.

Harpenden as a community feel very strongly about the fact that our service has been reduced, whilst we suffer some of the highest fares per mile in the country. We have held a public meeting with senior Thameslink Officials and representatives from Network Rail. They were unaware of the impact the reduction in our service is having on our community. It was obvious they have no idea of demand for the service in this town and had done no modelling on how the reduction in capacity would affect the town.

It is wholly unacceptable that they can reduce capacity on an already busy line.

The 15th July timetable will also see a further reduction in the number of rush hour trains both in and out of our town.

On an average return journey for me in the evening, I have to wait for long periods of time for a fast train going to Harpenden. If trains do arrive at St Pancras they are already full and difficult to board.

We need a timetable that offers equivalent train capacity as the December 2017 timetable. Please do not let the issue of Thameslink’s inability to stick to the 20th May timetable, cloud the issue that our service has been dramatically reduced. Even if the 20th May or 15th July timetable is correctly implemented Harpenden will see a huge reduction in our services and far increased journey times. Both timetable are not fit for purpose for Harpenden and are causing the many commuters who live there hours of misery, overcrowding and uncertainty on a daily basis.

July 2018