

Brighton & Hove Friends of the Earth

News Release

For Immediate Release: Tuesday, 17 April, 2018

Bank holiday engineering works will hit city economy

Brighton & Hove Friends of the Earth (BHFOE) [1] is challenging Network Rail to start putting the needs of Brighton & Hove above its own convenience. During the May bank holiday weekend, the start of the Brighton Festival and one of the busiest and most important times for the local economy, engineering works will mean there will be no direct trains to London or Gatwick Airport [2].

BHFOE are calling for Network Rail to be made more accountable locally. Network Rail needs to better understand the needs of local communities and to plan its activities accordingly [3]. BHFOE is calling on the City Council, local MPs and the Chamber of Commerce to get behind a campaign to get services reinstated and the engineering works rescheduled. It also feels that GTR and its subsidiaries Southern and Thameslink should also be backing the city, looking to put on more services on this busy weekend, not fewer, and challenging Network Rail to do better.

Chris Todd of BHFOE said:

“The May Bank holiday weekend is one of the busiest in the calendar. Apart from being a popular time for people to visit the city, it’s also the start of the Brighton Festival.

“We already have a problem with too many people driving into the city. We need Network Rail and rail operators to be increasing services, not bringing the city to a grinding halt. Disrupting rail services and reducing capacity shows how out of touch and unaccountable they think they are. Unfortunately, it’s not the first time that Network Rail has done this.

“It’s about time Network Rail was held to account locally. The Government needs to wake up to the shocking way coastal communities are being treated. Is it any wonder that we are failing to reduce carbon emissions and air pollution from transport sufficiently quickly when the people in charge are behaving like this?”

ENDS

Notes to editors:

[1] For more information on BHFOE see: <http://bhfoe.org/>

[2] There will be no direct trains between London and Brighton on Sunday 6th May and Monday 7th May due to [engineering works](#) between Gatwick and Three Bridges. There are also some other engineering works that weekend. In addition, on Saturday 5th May Thameslink services to London Bridge won’t run and all weekend looks like there will be a reduced capacity.

- [3] Unreliable weekend services due to engineering works - Campaign for Better Transport and Eastbourne Borough Council highlighted the negative impact of disruptive weekend rail engineering work for coastal communities in a 2017 report published by the [All Party Parliamentary Group on the Visitor Economy](#). Network Rail should be required to carry out more works in night possessions to address these concerns.