Stephanie Tobyn
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Railway Markets & economics
One Kemble Street,
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17th September 2018

Dear Stephanie,

Govia Thameslink Railway

Compliance with condition 4 of the passenger licence and GB Statement of National Regulatory Provisions: Passenger

I refer to your letter dated 5th September to Mr Verwer.

The May 2018 timetable was an unprecedented challenge for the industry as a whole, and it is clear that the industry initially collectively failed to deliver its requirements. Our customers and our people have suffered as a result which is a matter of very considerable regret to GTR. We do strive to deliver the best information we can to our customers in whatever circumstances that are being faced

Set out below is GTR's detailed response to the concerns raised by you relating to the provision of information for passengers using GTR's services.

1) Inadequate notice when planning travel at weekends

The significant disruption that GTR experienced at the commencement of the May 2018 timetable, whilst a national issue, did not affect all operators equally. In particular GTR and Northern Rail were severely affected. It is therefore not correct to say that; '…the rest of the Industry has returned to more normal timescales….' but rather that they were not impacted so could continue their recovery unhindered.

For GTR however, the impact of the timetable change on 20 May 2018 has been well documented and the impact of it wide-reaching, including upon the industry Informed Traveller process and weekend engineering plans.

As a result of the delays in finalising the May 18 timetable by Network Rail, GTR had to re-write the weekend timetable twice and complete an amended interim timetable that commenced on the 15th July 2018.

Until the Interim timetable was completed on the 15th July there was no base to plan the weekend engineering timetables upon. Furthermore, the volume and scale of the engineering work (especially Thameslink Resilience Programme Works) that GTR is currently having to manage is larger than any in recent history – so the normal 'peaks' and, more importantly, 'troughs', of workload are somewhat distorted. As a result, GTR finds itself further behind the

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National Recovery Plan than it either intended or certainly wishes to be due to circumstances beyond its control.

Following the re-issuing of the National Recovery Plan, GTR is working with Network Rail to recalibrate the GTR/Network Rail joint recovery plan. The latest version of which is attached at Appendix One.

It is important to reiterate that the delivery of this plan still remains at risk from late change, for a variety of reasons including, but not limited to, late notice engineering change and special events.

In your letter of 5th September you referred specifically to engineering work on the 8th September. The information lag and timeline associated with this was:

- Monday 13th August   GTR bid timetable to Network Rail
- Tuesday 4th September   Network Rail offered and uploaded the timetable
- Wednesday 5th September   Confirmed services appeared down-stream

These are not untypical timescales to complete the volume of work required, but clearly are a problem when they are in progress so close to the date of operation.

To confirm however; the engineering work was known in advance (and its outline impacts) which is how the Network Rail Thameslink Resilience Programme Team were able to provide the level of information that they did, supported by GTR. There is of course a difference between knowing what the engineering work is and creating the amended timetable to support. All mitigations were in place to advise customers about the works and for customers to check back to the journey planners. Please see below for examples of mitigations in place for all engineering work:
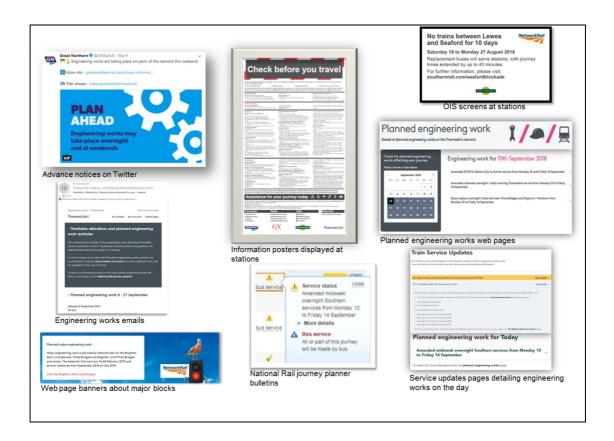
- Engineering posters at stations to advise what is happening and ask customers to continue to check
- Alerts on NRE journey planners (these also feed the ticket engine for GTR)
- Social media reactive alerts
- CIS and PA announcements at stations
- RT-PIS on board most of our trains
- OBS announcements on board trains
- Emails to customers to advice what is happening and to check before travelling

Advance notices on Twitter

Engineering works emails

Web page banners about major blocks

Information posters displayed at stations

National Rail journey planner bulletins

OIS screens at stations

Planned engineering works web pages

Service updates pages detailing engineering works on the day

GTR is fully aware of the importance of advanced information (even if not fully confirmed) and is working closely with Network Rail to improve where possible what is shown in journey planners: GTR has in the last two weeks jointly agreed a process with Network Rail whereby timetables are uploaded and sent down-stream as soon as they are bid by GTR, with the validation work to follow and any subsequent alterations re-sent.

Customer Feedback

GTR continually monitors customer's feedback via Social Media and Customer Relations. The general level of feedback about weekend engineering is extremely low, suggesting that customers are reasonably comfortable with the service they are experiencing and that the mitigations GTR already has in place are working. The table below provides further information about the level of complaints received.

	P13	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5
Engineering complaints	9	21	22	3	7	6
Total Complaints	3315	3,385	3,912	7,277	7,002	5,455
% of complaints	0.27%	0.62%	0.56%	0.04%	0.10%	0.11%

Additionally, GTR received 56 social mentions in 5 periods, of which 8 were complaints. 19 of these mentions were specifically relating to third party apps (Citymapper / Trainline).

2) *Managing information for Thameslink & Great Northern at London stations*

From May 2018, services that previously operated solely to and from London King's Cross will now be split with services on the same route departing to and from St Pancras and King's Cross. GTR identified this as a potential information risk, both at the stations themselves and via on line channels.

With this in mind, GTR undertook research to understand what was in place for other locations that have similar circumstances (i.e. separate services with trains to and from the same station that are situated within the same conurbation). Case studies used were:

Stations	Shared destinations
Wigan North Western / Wigan Wallgate	Manchester
Warrington Bank Quay / Central	Manchester / Liverpool
Birmingham New Street / Moor Street / Snow Hill	Leamington / Worcester /London
Southend Central / Victoria	London
London Waterloo / Waterloo East	No common destinations, but the station shares a common entrance

Following site visits and on-line investigation, it became clear that the only physical arrangements in place at these locations was signage directing to the other location, but no acknowledgement of trains to the same destination departing from the other station. Even at London Waterloo where the two stations share a common entrance, the CIS of the two stations is treated separately with no mention of services from Waterloo East from the main departure board. A separate Summary of Departures screen at the bottom of the escalators to Waterloo East lists departures.

On-line, each location has a 'station group' (e.g. Southend [all stations]) that can be used to plan a journey to/from each town covering all stations. There is no way to see trains to a common destination from both stations using 'Live departures'.

Initial measures

King's Cross/St Pancras were already compliant with the established national custom and practice of limited ability to plan journeys from both stations and no cross-publication of departure information between stations. However, GTR felt that there was justification for raising the bar with information provision in this area and have been engaging with Network Rail and Rail Delivery Group (RDG) for some time to ensure all parties work collaboratively to make improvements for customers.

A number of initial measures are already in place while development work for the more complex solutions continues.

Pre and Post May 2018 Timetable Introduction

At the stations

- Station posters have been displayed around King's Cross station explaining that a number of services have been transferred to St Pancras. (Picture One below)
- Special notices were posted on the CIS at both Kings Cross and St Pancras leading up the timetable change and for the following two months

- Mobile CIS departure board has been placed at the entrance to the Thameslink platforms at St Pancras that shows the relevant departures from Kings Cross. (Picture Two below)

On Line (Led by RDG)

All additional on line functionality is being led by RDG to ensure that the National Rail Enquiries website and app support the changes. GTR take these feeds (which was a PIDD deliverable) which we supported.

- Bulletins have been attached to the NRE journey planners for: (Picture Three below)
  - all trains which serve destinations that now have departures to/arrivals from both stations
  - all trains which serve destinations that have seen a change in the London terminal they are served by
  These bulletins explain that trains may now operate to/from either terminal and that it is necessary to plan a journey from either. Bulletins are displayed on NRE and all systems that take the bulletin feed including GTRs own websites and web ticketing systems and apps. (Picture four below)
- Bulletins have been placed on the NRE Live departure boards for both St Pancras and Kings Cross explaining that Cambridge and Peterborough route services may depart from either station. Bulletins are displayed on NRE and all systems that take the bulletin feed including GTRs own website and apps system. (Picture five below)
- Combined London King's Cross St Pancras [All stations] station group - Due to limitations with the RDG station grouping functionality, the 'London [all stations]' group does not allow you to adequately plan journeys to/from either St Pancras or King's Cross combined. It looks for the first station a given services calls at in the London [All stations] group. This means that for northbound journeys, the planner looks for journeys from London Bridge or London King's Cross which can produce some unexpected results. To mitigate this, a separate station group 'London King's Cross St Pancras [All stations]' has been created, allowing customers to plan journeys to/from both stations in one action. This is already active on the NRE desktop site, and will be rolled out on the NRE app and (via Darwin) to third party sites as soon as possible. An update from RDG on this timescale has been requested. (Picture Six below)
- Reduction in King's Cross St Pancras interchange time. To reduce the chances of journeys from the alternative station not being shown when it is appropriate to do so. GTR has also worked with RDG to reduce the minimum inter-station interchange time at Kings Cross St Pancras from the previous minimum of 31 minutes, to a more realistic 21 minutes. This has involved a significant amount of development work as system limitations previously meant that the interchange time had to be at least equal to the combined internal interchange at King's Cross (15 mins) and St Pancras (15 mins) plus a minimum walking time between the two of 1 minute.

Picture One · **Picture Two** · **Picture Three**

Picture Six

Picture Four · **Picture Five**

Further developments

At the stations

- Main departure screens at Kings Cross are having a software upgrade to allow the original services from Kings Cross to show when they are departing from St Pancras. Development has been finalised and the first test will take place on the 19th September 2018. This will also feed onto the summary departures in the Underground concourses.

Mockup of what the summary of departures will look like – taken during Factory Acceptance Testing

- During the larger upgrade of St Pancras (HS1 owned) similar opportunities will be explored to show Kings Cross departures from the summary of departures. No dates are available at present as this a project being delivered by HS1.

On Line

In addition to the steps listed above, GTR is working with suppliers to make the following principles a reality:

- Customers will be able to check a single on-line live departure board to see departures from both stations; and
- Customers planning a journey from either of the two stations will also see journeys from the other with an appropriate additional walking time added on.

Requests for these two pieces of functionality were made to RDG in April 2018. As detailed previously, these two pieces of functionality do not exist currently for other locations, so it was necessary for RDG board approval to be granted. This has now been approved and GTR is awaiting a detailed project plan and timescales from RDG. It is expected that any roll out will be in two phases. Initially the functionality changes will be made directly to OJP (i.e. they will only show on the NRE products) with a further update to Darwin taking place at a later time. This approach is necessary due to the current workload of the RDG Darwin team meaning they are unlikely to be able to prioritise this work until the New Year.

3) Passenger information on Class 700 trains

GTR provides the following in response to your request for information on the Class 700 trains:

PIS System - Fault Reporting of PIS Issues. Fault Reporting Methods:

- **Driver Checking Operation at Start/During Journey –** During the 700 conversion course drivers were instructed to check the front coach for PIS display and audible announcement after entering the journey code. Further briefing was given in 2018.
  Additionally the HMI (Human Machine Interface) has the capability to display 'PIS fault in coach xxxx' depending on the type of fault – this would also alert the driver to a potential fault mid journey.
  If the PIS screens are not working the driver would not necessarily make additional announcements – as long as the audible announcements were operating as they should be. If the auto audible announcements were not operating correctly then the driver would make manual PA's to ensure the correct information is relayed to the passengers albeit they would not be as frequent as the automatic system. As an absolute minimum we would expect – START OF JOURNEY – WHEN MISSING OUT STATIONS ALONG THE ROUTE (either booked or not booked) – KEY CHANGE OVER POINTS – END OF JOURNEY.

- **Identified Faults –** All PIS faults are called to Fleet Control to log with Siemens for rectification. The need to report defects to control is part of the driver's duties. The PIS on the 700 fleet is linked to the same software as the SDO (Selective Door Operation) which means different checks need to be made by the driver when they first start the train and fault rectifications are prioritised by Fleet Control. The driver will also receive fault messages for system faults detected by the train management system for the PIS on their HMI display and Siemens will also receive diagnostic faults via remote reporting systems enabling them to provide fixes.
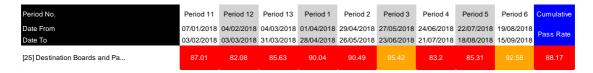
- **Faults from customers and staff –** All faults that are seen and reported via Social Media, Customer Relations, In Service Report and Quest audits are reported directly to Fleet Control. These are shared with Siemens daily for prioritisation and rectification.

PIS Screens Failures

Although the class 700 is technically capable of receiving remote upload of the PIS database and GTR developed a system that can send remotely a different PIS code or message, the function is extremely limited due to the design of the class 700, as short notice changes to the stopping patterns cannot be sent to the train without manual intervention. This is especially restrictive at timetable changes and short term planning (engineering work) when new stopping patterns are needed for the train service.

The Class 700 uses a system called livecom to create the PIS database and additionally the SDO door release. Although two systems within the train, they are linked and so if a new stopping pattern not in the database is created, the whole fleet has to be manually loaded with the new database or else risk the door release functionality to stop working. As the fleet comprises 115 trains the roll out takes significant time and so short notice changes are not practical. Therefore planned changes with notice can be planned in for manual loading, but quick changes cannot be implemented practically between creation and their use.

A new database is currently being loaded onto the 700 fleet which will add the additional services needed post the May TT introduction. GTR are a third of the way through installation, with all services envisaged to be loaded by December 2018. The software change is making a difference in what the customer is seeing on the train. This is evidenced in the P6 of Quest improvements.

Period No.	Period 11	Period 12	Period 13	Period 1	Period 2	Period 3	Period 4	Period 5	Period 6	Cumulative Pass Rate
Date From	07/01/2018	04/02/2018	04/03/2018	01/04/2018	29/04/2018	27/05/2018	24/06/2018	22/07/2018	19/08/2018	
Date To	03/02/2018	03/03/2018	31/03/2018	28/04/2018	26/05/2018	23/06/2018	21/07/2018	18/08/2018	15/09/2018	
[25] Destination Boards and Pa...	87.01	82.08	85.63	90.04	90.49	95.42	83.2	85.31	92.58	88.17

If you would like to understand how the PIS system operates on the class 700's, GTR would welcome the opportunity of arranging a session to explain this further with you.

As requested a copy of the latest version of the QuEST Handbook will be provided separately.

Yours sincerely

Steve White
Chief Operating Officer