



Marcus Clements
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Railway markets & economics
ORR
One Kemble Street,
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13th March 2020

Dear Marcus

In response to your letter dated 14th February, please find set out below GTR/NR's response to the points raised.

Providing information and supporting our customers is what we strive for everyday and especially during disruption. GTR and Network Rail work collaboratively to ensure the smooth running of our railway and when, for example, the infrastructure fails, to fix it as quick as possible, recover the service and do everything we can to inform our customers of the travel options available to them.

The power failure on the 18 December caused huge disruption for our customers who were travelling in the area. As for all large operational incidents we carried out a hot debrief review (operations) undertaken in the TBROC on the 23rd December Appendix A

What went wrong?

We have reviewed the infrastructure response to the incident that was caused by a voltage spike as a result of the configuration of the UKPN infrastructure at Croydon. The protection systems operated as designed and prevented significant damage to the signalling systems. We have met with UKPN to assure ourselves that they have made temporary arrangements to prevent this failure happening again and have a longer-term solution. We have also confirmed with UKPN that there are no other locations on their network that could have a similar impact on NR infrastructure.

Passenger Impact – What we did well?

- A very challenging scenario with all lines closed with messaging across digital quick and reactive to offer the few alternatives that were available to customers. The advice given tried to cover North and South of the river but a large message (as a result of the scale of disruption) was, at times, difficult to consume - good efforts were made to break the message up into chunks relevant to customers where possible.
 - A good range of travel alternatives were made available to get people moving
 - Full explanation of impact included in all messaging
- A 'Do Not Travel' message was quickly shared externally and internally with TfL quickly supporting the 'Do Not Travel' to Victoria



- Good linkage between NRSE twitter and GTR twitter, in line with the nature of the scope of the audience there was a small amount of conflicting information particularly about Victoria being closed. The station was closed at times and the decision to try and push people away from the station due to the crowding was correct at the time. For example, the Croydon Power failure apology twitter thread was seen by almost 250,000 people, with 40,000-plus direct engagements. A post-incident explainer blog by NR Managing Director John Halsall was read by more than 13,000 people.
- The decision to remain connected to Darwin during the national outage was the right one on balance for GTR to allow the teams to maintain the train service using Darwin Admin Workstation, this did mean errors on CIS outside London, but this would have been minimal. Disconnecting would have caused a larger misinformation pattern until close of service.
- Good PA from Victoria control point - Initially unaware of the scale but corrected their message and advised no trains at all from LBG / BFRs / VIC etc.
 - The option for East Croydon bound passengers to take a Southeastern train to Beckenham Junction and change on to Tramlink was regularly given out over the PA including which train and platform number.
- The decision to close the Gateline so customers could not access platforms thus ensuring that safety was not compromised

Passenger Impact – What didn't go so well and mitigations introduced

- NR JC Decaux marketing boards considered but not used. The team in the Victoria control point did not have capacity to pause and activate the screens.
 - New process and system fix to be defined to give the Duty Customer Experience Managers in the TBROC the authority to add messages to the screens in severe disruption.
 - NR are introducing Customer Ambassadors at Victoria in particular to oversee the information provision on OIS and JC Decaux boards during disruption with a key interface with the control point. Over 40 colleagues have now been trained.
- Pan London messaging was sporadic with the complication that not all of the station was non-operational – As part of the PIDD+ workstream work has already started to improve the processes in how the messaging is escalated within the NOC and a further meeting is being held with the RDG NRCC on 11th March to look at the escalation processes used to enhance the national message
- Disruption Mode didn't work as expected. All trains were removed from the boards when trains were running at many stations. This was an intermittent fault that had proved difficult to replicate so a solution could be found. This has now been rectified. Disruption mode was still activated at stations where we were confident the staff could assist with its delivery via local announcements.
- National Darwin Outage combined with a train describer outage made a considerable challenge to the delivery of information and made the management of DELAYED trains very difficult - Escalated with RDG, discussions are being held with the Customer Information Group to ensure RDG are aware of the challenges faced and find resolutions.



- Continuing to play non-essential messaging across the station which could have been turned off.
 - This has been added to the disruption process
 - We are investigating with Worldline a technical solution to avoid manual intervention

To ensure that we continually improve and take into account the impact to customers in any incident review, a process to change our SPIR (significant performance incident review) into SCIIR (Significant Customer Impact Incident Review) is underway to ensure we are 'Putting Passengers First'.

To enable this approach to be effective, managers across the businesses are being trained in the facilitation of reviews to ensure the discussions and actions taken forward give the best outcomes for our customers and for operational improvements.

Please do not hesitate to contact our teams if you require any further information on the points answered.

Yours sincerely,

Steve White
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Govia Thameslink Railway

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