



ORR's Consumer Expert Panel

This note sets out the main areas of discussion at the ORR Consumer Expert Panel meeting of 02 March 2017.

Attendees

Panel Members:

- Carol Brennan
- Ray Kemp
- Trisha McAuley
- Diane McCrea
- Rob Sheldon
- Claire Whyley

Nominated Members:

- Mike Hewitson – Transport Focus
- Stephen Locke - London TravelWatch

ORR Attendees:

- Siobhán Carty
- Annette Egginton
- Andrew Eyles
- Richard Gusanie
- Lucy Squire
- Stephanie Tobyn (Chair)
- Joanna Whittington

Introductory Message

1. ORR Chief Executive Joanna Whittington welcomed the new Panel members, and set out ORR's roles and responsibilities, business planning and priorities for 2017-18, and ORR's view on how the Panel can add value to ORR's work.

ORR's Consumer work

2. Stephanie Tobyn set out ORR's approach to its consumer work and gave an overview of the current work programme. ORR's work on ticket vending machines and the annual consumer report was discussed in more detail with the Panel members.
3. There was discussion about ORR's approach to enforcement and the approaches ORR can take if engagement with operators does not yield the required improvements. These approaches depend on the legislation being used.
4. The Panel were interested in ORR's approach to monitoring highways and how it ensures that this is within the consumer interest, including through mechanisms such as complaints. It was agreed that ORR's role in relation to highways will be discussed further at a future meeting.
5. There was also discussion on how looking at case studies for other sectors, especially in terms of complaints handling could be useful for identifying and promoting good practice.
6. The Panel were interested in how consumer protection is embedded in the organisational culture of the train operators and how ORR encourages and monitors this.

Introduction to PR18

7. Siobhán Carty and Richard Gusanie gave the Panel an introduction to the 2018 periodic review (PR18) of Network Rail process and ORR's approach to helping ensure stakeholder priorities are reflected in PR18.
8. The Panel considered that ORR should ensure Network Rail has flexibility in how it engages with its stakeholders but also that there should be clear evidence of how this information is used to inform the business planning process and reach a final view of priorities. Examples of stakeholder engagement in other sectors, such as the nuclear energy sector and water, were discussed.
9. The Panel considered that the strength of the end user evidence provided by stakeholder groups is critical to the process, and noted that it should reflect the views

of the local community. The question of how to incorporate the views of potential customers was also discussed.

10. The Panel requested further future engagement with the Team regarding the developments in this area.

ORR's Approach to crowding

11. Andrew Eyles led a discussion on ORR's approach to crowding. In suggesting ways to develop its approach, the Panel agreed that more work needed to be carried out and discussed the need to revisit existing and potentially commission new research to assess passenger perceptions of crowding.
12. There was acknowledgement that crowding may be perceived differently by passengers based on their usual travel experience. The Panel noted that length of the journey may be a factor in a passenger's perception of crowding, with passengers potentially being more accepting of standing on shorter journeys. It was noted that new technology solutions such as the introduction and improvement of Wi-Fi on trains has the potential to improve the experience and satisfaction of passengers, and reduce crowding through more flexible travel arrangements.
13. The Panel noted that operational issues could also affect a passenger's perception where they could reasonably expect to have a seat on the journey under normal circumstances. Ways to address crowding were discussed, including the provision of further information on where seats are available on trains, information about the least crowded services to take, priority seat card schemes, bike reservation and standing only carriages.

Next meeting: 27 September 2017