



## **ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY SELECT COMMITTEE**

**Date: Thursday, 18 October 2018**

**Time: 6.30pm,**

**Location: Shimkent Room - Daneshill House, Danestrete**

**Contact: Fungai Nyamukapa - 01438 242707**

**Members:** Councillors: M Downing (Chair), M Hurst (Vice-Chair), L Briscoe, J Brown, D Cullen, J Fraser, L Kelly, A McGuinness, A Mitchell CC, S-J Potter and S Speller

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### **AGENDA**

#### **PART 1**

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

To receive apologies for absence and declarations of interest

**2. MINUTES - 1 AUGUST 2018**

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the Environment and Economy Select Committee meeting held on 1 August 2018

Pages 3 – 4

**3. STEVENAGE RAIL STATION**

To establish how the implementation of the new rail timetable and service are running and to attempt to reach out to rail users and offer support for a user group for Stevenage

To consider the following issues:

- May Timetable update
- Rail Users Group update
- Post-May Timetable Developments
- Plans for Fifth Platform at Stevenage, the Hertford Loop and Replacement Bus Service
- Future consultations with stakeholders
- Support for Stevenage Rail Users Group

Pages 5 – 46

**4. URGENT PART 1 BUSINESS**

To consider any Part 1 business accepted by the Chair as urgent.

**5. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

To consider the following motions –

1. That under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as described in paragraphs 1 – 7 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act as amended by Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006.

2. That Members consider the reasons for the following reports being in Part II and determine whether or not maintaining the exemption from disclosure of the information contained therein outweighs the public interest in disclosure.

**6. URGENT PART II BUSINESS**

To consider any Part II business accepted by the Chair as urgent.

Agenda Published **10 October 2018**

## STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

### ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY SELECT COMMITTEE MINUTES

Date: Wednesday, 1 August 2018

Time: 6.00pm

Place: Shimkent Room - Daneshill House, Danestrete

**Present:** Councillors: Michael Downing (Chair), Matthew Hurst (Vice Chair), Lloyd Briscoe, David Cullen, James Fraser, Andy McGuinness, Adam Mitchell CC, Sarah-Jane Potter and Simon Speller

**Start / End**      Start Time:    6.00pm  
**Time:**            End Time:       6.45pm

#### 1      **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Jim Brown and Lizzie Kelly.

Councillor McGuinness declared a personal interest in item 3 relating to public toilet provision in the town as he was employed as the Campaigns Manager for Crohns and Colitis UK.

#### 2      **MINUTES - 13 JUNE 2018**

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Economy Select Committee held on 13 June 2018 are approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

It was noted that the items relating to the Licence to Occupy procedures and the review of the Direct Services Business Unit would be submitted to the October meeting of the Committee.

In relation to the item on the Transport Strategy officers advised this would be coming forward towards the end of the year.

#### 3      **PRESENTATION ON PUBLIC TOILETS**

The Committee received a presentation from the Assistant Director Direct Services on the current situation regarding the provision of toilets in the Town including the New Town Centre (Joy Ride), Old Town (Middle Row) and Stevenage Indoor Market.

The Committee were pleased to note the improvements to the Town Centre facilities including replacement vanity units, floor coverings and total redecoration internally and externally. It was also noted that the funding had now also been approved for improvements to the Middle Row facilities in the Old Town.

Members were concerned regarding the opening times and accessibility of toilets during the evening, particularly with the regeneration of the town centre and the night time economy offer. The Assistant Director advised that this issue would form part of the discussions around the regeneration proposals including the potential for toilets to be listed as part of the new wayfinder information.

In response to a question, the Committee was advised that the Town Centre (Joy Ride) facilities had come to the end of their serviceable life and required replacement. The works had also given the Council an opportunity to review and enhance the cleansing arrangements for the facilities.

It was agreed that safety and cleanliness of the facilities were the main considerations but that different styles of facilities should be looked at during the regeneration of the Town including a Changing Places toilet for people with profound disabilities who cannot use standard accessible toilets. The importance of inclusiveness and accessibility was also stressed with the requirement for ease of access to a functioning disabled toilet including for those with hidden disabilities. Members were supportive of the 'can't wait' card issued by Crohns and Colitis UK as a discreet mechanism to access toilet facilities and agreed that more promotion was needed in this area.

It was **RESOLVED** that the presentation be noted.

**4 URGENT PART 1 BUSINESS**

None.

**5 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

Not required.

**6 URGENT PART II BUSINESS**

None.

**CHAIR**



# Cllr Downing Stevenage Borough Council

18 October 2018

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Larry Heyman, Local Development Manager for Thameslink & Great Northern

Patrick Ladbury, Local Development Manager for Thameslink & Great Northern designate

Phil Hutchinson, Head of Strategic Planning

Jane Cobb, Communications Manager timetable



# Agenda

- Interim Thameslink & Great Northern timetable
- September – December 2018
- Compensation
- Performance
- Class 717
- Q&A

# Our unique contract

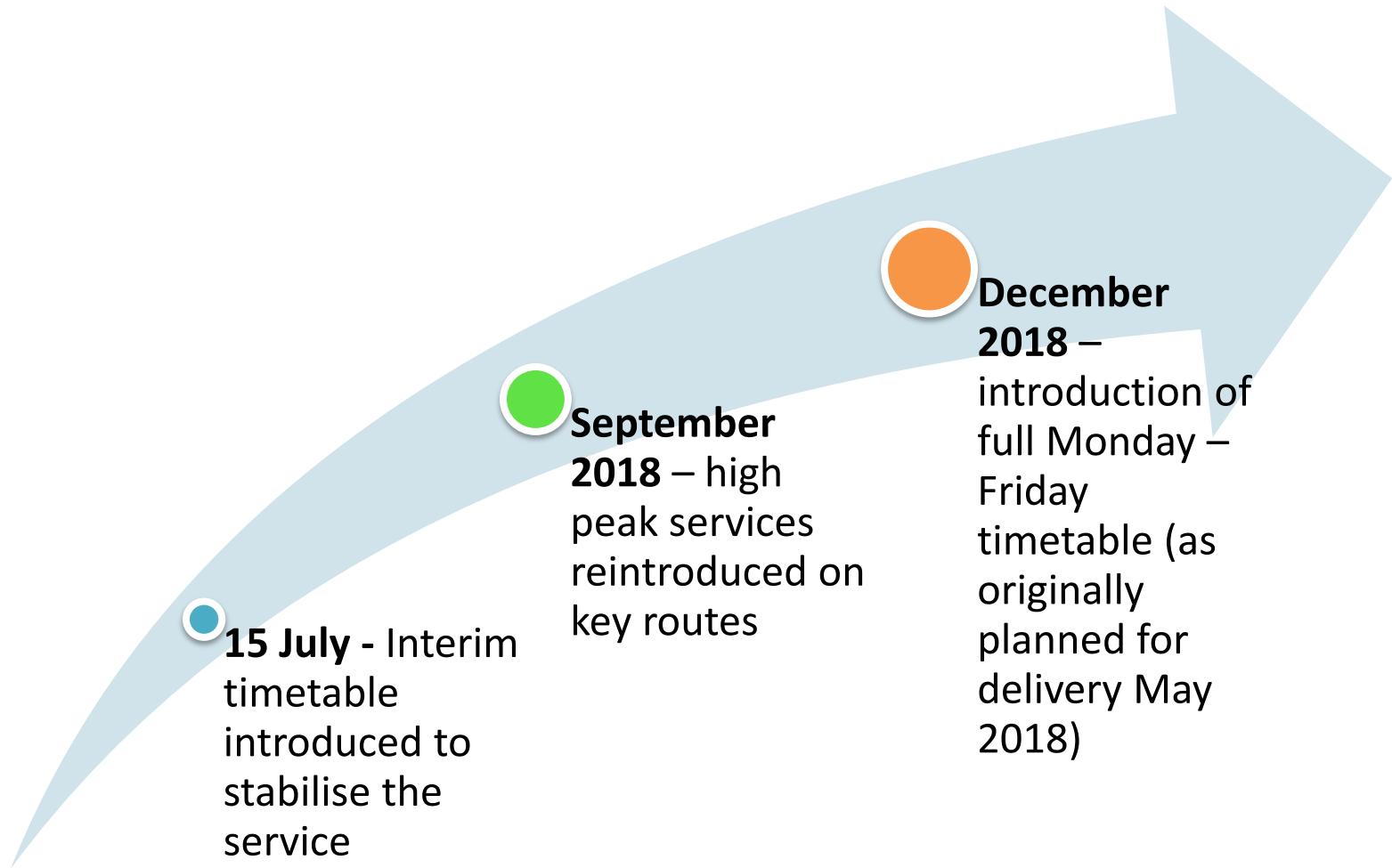
- All farebox revenue is passed to the DfT, who determine the level of all fares increases
- All performance income from Network Rail is passed to the DfT
- The DfT funds all payments against Delay Repay claims but GTR funds the necessary administration costs
- GTR receives a payment from the DfT for running the franchise.
- The payment varies and depends on performance against Service Delivery, Customer Experience and Ticketless Travel benchmarks

## May 2018 – Lessons learnt & next steps

- Independent enquiries by the ORR and Transport Select Committee into the industry timetable process & 20 May readiness
- National Programme Management office set up to oversee all Train Operating Companies' future timetable changes
- No major changes in December 2018
- Priority of maintaining train service reliability and getting resources in place

# July 2018 – December 2018

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# Compensation

- Open to season ticket holders and non season ticket holders (travelled 3 days a week)
- Industry funded
- Phase 1 completed successfully, 63,000 people contacted
- Phase 2 is underway - allowing season ticket holders not contacted to apply directly

## How will the scheme work?

### Phase 1

From 29 August

- We will contact eligible customers with season tickets who are on our database outlining what compensation they are entitled to and let them know what they have to do.

### Phase 2

By the end of September

- We will invite season ticket holders who weren't contacted in Phase 1 to claim online.

### Phase 3

ASAP

- We will extend to those without season tickets.

# Performance – Great Northern

Period 6 (19 August – 15 September) Public Performance Measure PPM: 84.36%

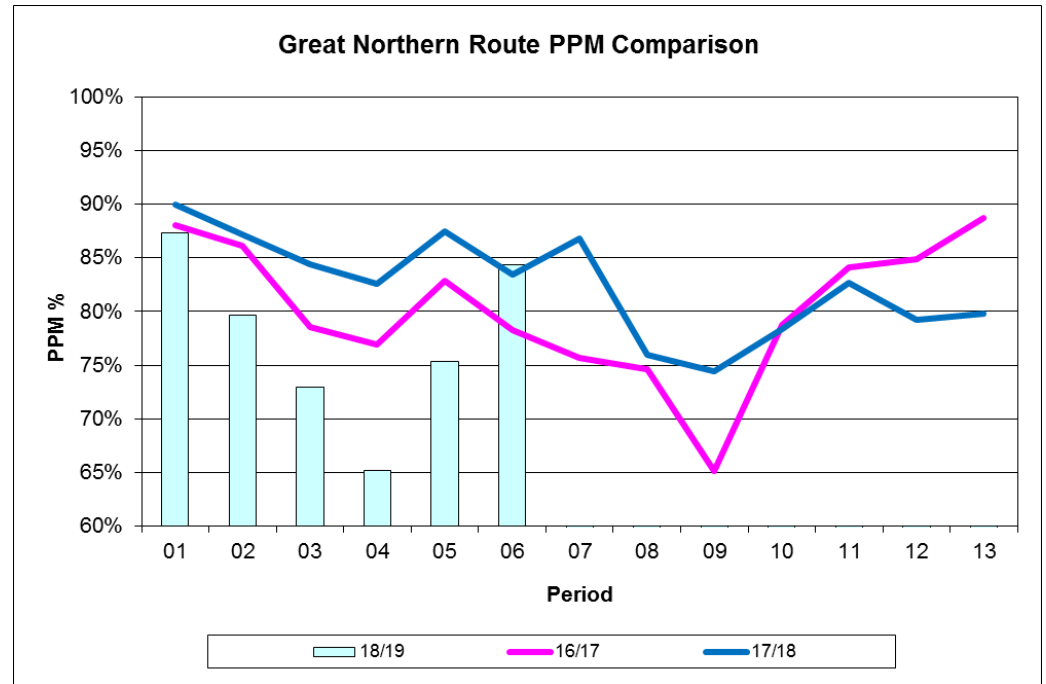
## Major incidents impacting performance:

**28 August 2018** – Overhead wire fault at Hadley Wood

**28 August 2018** – Train fault at Moorgate

**7 September 2018** – Train fault at Welwyn Garden City

**7 September 2018** – Track fault at Moorgate



# Class 717 update

New train fleet due to begin being introduced on Moorgate services later this autumn

- **6 trains in the UK**
- **Formed of 6 carriages each**
- **Operational testing currently underway**
- **First preview service ran on 28 September**

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## Features include:

- 2-by-2 seating
- Customer information screens with live updates from London Underground & Overground and be able to show you which parts of the train is less busy
- Wi-Fi
- Power sockets
- CCTV





## **Issues and questions raised by Stevenage Rail User Group**

We wish to raise by way of an agenda the following points on the 18th October:

1. What plans are there for Stevenage station to gain more seats during peak hours? We want to ensure and avoid at all costs any discussion whereby Govia feel this be a “wider network discussion”. We are asking specifically about Stevenage station, and why 90% of those that board a train in the morning have to stand all the way to London. Wholly unacceptable.
2. Why specifically are there no starter trains for Stevenage? If there were to be, what specifically is required infrastructure wise? Fifth platform. Discuss.
3. If Stevenage cannot accommodate a starter train, why has provision not been made for trains to start further south than Cambridge or Peterborough? There needs to be evidence from Govia that they have considered what’s best for Stevenage - not just treat the town as an afterthought but the town itself and the commuters using it. Please request evidence of how many SEATS EXACTLY additionally we can expect from December in the revised timetable. Nobody is convinced the service will improve, merely a few more train options but without seating. There is little point in starting a train from Peterborough for it to be jammed full by the time it arrives into Stevenage. What is the plan here? My expectation is for a granular explanation from Govia to then relay to the wider group.
4. How many additional high peak trains are expected and when? This is urgently required as there was little to no consultation when the timetable was revised back in May. Time for Govia to listen to those that pay the money and use the service.

**In addition** - ahead of the meeting on the 18th, I suggest we take a quantitative approach to matters. Please see below my requests on behalf of the group.

It is evident that out of 14,000 commuters who use the station each day, only 100 people were consulted as to the May timetable changes. I strongly suggest in order for there to be a solution, we remedy this immediately to give us facts to work from going forward.

1. My suggestion is Govia present rail user numbers on the 18th October who boarded a train between 6am - 9am on a given working week day and were unable to be seated. I think it’s vital Govia are accountable to provide their feedback based on how many passengers EXACTLY cannot be seated each day during high peak hours. I would like to then compare this with the anticipated number of seats they propose to make available ONLY AT STEVENAGE STATION on the 9th December 2018. I also want to discuss how peak trains would be therefore be required to accommodate the station - there aren’t nearly enough either AM or PM.

### **Total people boarding V's Seats available**

2. If GOVIA refuse to assist by accommodating the above (very reasonable) request, then I would be keen to hear why exactly this is given they have advised they are looking to assist to rectify the exceptionally poor service of late? If they have these exact numbers to provide, then I would like clarity on how these were obtained to ensure they are accurate in their assessment of the station's needs. This point is vital to discussions I feel. If I can give up countless hours to collate feedback on behalf of the Rail Group to improve things, then I would expect a large corporate like Govia to oblige without any hesitation whatsoever. Let's start with the facts, not a sample size of 100 people which started this sorry mess in the first place.

To be clear, I'm requesting this evaluation be conducted before the 18th October to ensure we have completely accurate information to work from in this meeting.

Please treat the above with the urgency it requires, we have been more than patient since May - it's time for a well overdue course correction.

Aljit Vohra for Stevenage Rail User Group





# **OFFICE OF RAIL AND ROAD: INDEPENDENT INQUIRY INTO THE TIMETABLE DISRUPTION IN MAY 2018**

20 SEPTEMBER 2018





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# OFFICE OF RAIL AND ROAD: INDEPENDENT INQUIRY INTO THE TIMETABLE DISRUPTION IN MAY 2018

20 SEPTEMBER 2018

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The following additional annexes can be found on the ORR website

- Annex B Terms of Reference
- Annex C Full timeline
- Annex D Passenger impact research
- Annex E ORR performance data
- Annex F Record of evidence



# FOREWORD

From 20th May 2018 rail passengers in two parts of the country suffered major disruption. People suffered inconvenience, financial and emotional cost over a period of several weeks. They were badly treated on a daily basis by the operators that they had paid in the expectation of a decent service.

The railway had introduced the largest ever revision to the national timetable, involving changes to 46 per cent of train times. The intention was—and remains—to offer more services and more reliability by bringing into use enhanced track, signalling and trains. But in the Northern Trains area (around the North West) and the Govia Thameslink area (some routes into London) things went badly wrong.

Everyone in the industry was surprised, and deeply disappointed, that we failed to deliver the improvements on the date promised. We now have to understand the causes. Unless improvements are made to the way the railway deals with changes like this, something similar may happen again in spite of best endeavours.

The Office of Rail and Road (ORR), which I chair, is an independent body that protects the interests of rail and road users. We are responding to a request from the Secretary of State for Transport for advice on what went wrong and what should be changed to prevent a recurrence. We will publish our recommendations by the end of 2018.

This is an interim report. It sets out an account of the events before and after 20th May. We have taken a forensic approach, with a degree of analysis and depth that has not occurred before. The facts have been checked with the respective parties. We make findings as to the root causes of the failures.

There is an honourable tradition in the rail industry that when things do go wrong employees will be resourceful enough to find a fix—as they do on a daily basis. In planning the May timetable revision over-optimism led to neglect of the risk that repeated slippage past known deadlines would leave

the operators with far too little time to uncover problems in implementation and find those fixes. In the event the operators were overwhelmed. They had made insufficient provision to help people in the event that things went wrong.

The railway is a complex set of inter-dependent activities. Decisions or failures in one activity can have implications for the delivery of service over a large geographical area, the more so as the numbers of trains and passengers have increased. It has become clear that there are inadequate mechanisms to ensure that decisions involving any one activity observe a due regard for implications for the system as a whole.

When a change to a system requires a sequence of stages the implementation plan must include deadlines for each stage designed to allow subsequent processes to complete in good time. A particularly large or complicated set of changes make it all the more important that the plan is respected. On the contrary, for the May timetable changes there were well-intentioned but counter-productive late adjustments to “de-risk” the situation. Network Rail’s timetable planning department, the System Operator, was best placed to notice that a problem was developing and they did recognise this. But they did not take sufficient action to manage the risks or the consequences. The present industry arrangements do not support clarity of decision making: it was unclear who was responsible for what. Nobody took charge.

The ORR started a formal investigation into a possible licence breach back in February when it became apparent that Network Rail would fail to publish a final timetable twelve weeks in advance. But that was on the relatively limited grounds that passengers would not be able to plan ahead. Like everybody else, ORR could have pursued the equally vital question as to whether this failure signalled that the operators would have insufficient time to assemble the necessary resources.

These are some of the issues we will address in the second phase of our work.

Our Inquiry is being advised by a panel of distinguished and highly experienced individuals, for which we are grateful. We recognised from the outset that the ORR itself is part of the industry and that we need to be as exposed to objective scrutiny as every other body. We set up a Prior Role Review under the chairmanship of the Chief Inspector of Railways, operating under protocols used when ORR is dealing with a possible breach of health and safety regulations. The findings from the Prior Role Review have been fully incorporated in this report.

I would like to acknowledge that, through no fault of their own, a number of railway employees were placed in circumstances that asked a very great deal of them: this includes those in passenger-facing positions and those being asked to write and endlessly re-write railway timetables to unreasonable deadlines.

We have enjoyed good cooperation from the rail industry, the Department for Transport and others in preparing this interim report, for which we are grateful: there is a consensus that there is a problem that needs to be understood and resolved.

The staff of ORR have been dedicated and selfless in securing, collating and checking the evidence and drafting this report. I am grateful to them all, but especially to Dan Brown as Inquiry Director and Claire Simpson as Project Director.



*Stephen Glaister*

**Stephen Glaister**  
Chair



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*"The timetable is our promise to passengers"*

Rail Delivery Group, 2015

1. On 20 May 2018, this promise was broken. This interim report into what happened focuses on identifying the factors that contributed to the failure to develop and implement an effective operational timetable in May 2018, and draws conclusions about the management of operational risks created by major timetable changes, based on information received from those involved. Phase 2 of the Inquiry will report before the end of 2018 to make recommendations for change. The Inquiry's Terms of Reference are in Annex B.
2. The Inquiry has reviewed over two thousand documents and conducted wide-ranging interviews with senior executives in the rail industry, other experts and government officials (listed in Annex F). We are grateful for the full and open engagement that the Inquiry has received from every participant. It is as clear as it is surprising that the scale of the disruption to passengers was not foreseen by any party until after it had begun. The full support that the Inquiry has received from participants illustrates the strong consensus among those involved that we must understand what has happened and make any necessary changes to ensure that it does not happen again.
3. This interim report finds that there were systemic weaknesses in the planning and delivery of major network changes, such as those required in preparation for the new timetable in May 2018, and concludes that there is a risk of repeated disruption if the lessons are not learnt and acted upon.
4. Although it is not the focus of this interim report, measures are being taken by the industry and government, in preparation for the planned timetable changes in December 2018 and May 2019, to address these risks.

The recommendations in the final report will consider these actions and whether further measures need to be taken.

## Disruption to passengers

5. In the weeks following 20 May 2018, many passengers travelling on the Northern and GTR networks were severely disrupted as a result of the failure of the introduction of a major new timetable, and passengers on many other networks suffered knock-on disruption to their services. This timetable was intended to deliver benefits to passengers as a result of major changes to the network but instead saw passengers experience significant cancellations and delays to their services. On the Northern network up to 310 scheduled trains did not run each weekday during the disruption and 470 scheduled trains per weekday did not run on the GTR network. Where trains did not run, there were significant delays and passengers were unable to rely on the timetable.
6. The impact of this experience has had a significant financial and emotional cost to those passengers affected, directly impacting upon their work and families and in some circumstances their personal safety. This has undermined the trust in the railway and the reliance they place upon it in their lives.

## Causes of the timetable disruption

7. The Inquiry has examined the different projects and processes that led up to the May 2018 timetable change, which stretch back many years in their planning and delivery. It finds that there are several critical points in



these processes where, had different decisions been taken, the subsequent disruption could have been avoided or significantly mitigated.

8. These different projects and processes were inter-dependent, which meant that risks and delays arising in one area were quickly passed to others. A bow-wave of risk built up through these interdependent elements over a period of several years.
9. These risks first emerged in delays to the planning and delivery of the North West Electrification Programme, combined with late changes to the scope of the Thameslink Programme, compressing the time available to develop the timetable and then further compressing the time left available for train operating companies to prepare for the implementation of new services. The scale and impact of these interdependent risks crystallised in May 2018, without any of the parties responsible apparently being aware of the scale of the consequences until after the disruption occurred.
10. The extended summary below outlines the Inquiry's findings in full and then examines why the governance structures that coordinate the rail industry failed to adequately identify and manage the systemic risks as they emerged. Among these, the Inquiry has found that there was a critical period during which, had different decisions been made, the disruption from 20 May 2018 onwards could have been avoided or significantly mitigated.
11. The Inquiry finds that in the autumn of 2017, two events combined that created critical risks to the timetabling process. As the North West electrification schemes fell behind schedule, a high-risk decision was taken to catch up the work over Christmas 2017 and, around the same time, a decision was taken to re-plan the introduction of the new Thameslink services. These decisions were taken in good faith, but without due regard for the schedule that needed to be followed to develop the timetable. When unexpected problems then occurred in consequence of both of these decisions (the Christmas works failed to be completed and the re-planning of the Thameslink services proved to be much more complex than expected), the timetable process began to fail because the volume of changes required was too great, at too late a point in the timetable development to be reasonably manageable.
12. These critical events are prior to the decisions made in January and February 2018 to proceed with the May 2018 timetable changes. The Inquiry considers that by this point the likelihood of disruption to passengers from the introduction of the timetable was probably unavoidable under any of the available options that were considered. If there was a final 'go / no-go' decision point that was missed, it was in autumn 2017, although judgements would have been better made earlier in August 2017 to align with the schedule for developing the timetable as set out in Part D of the Network Code.
13. The Inquiry has made findings attributable to Network Rail, the train operators, the Department for Transport (DfT) and the Office of Rail and Road (ORR) about the failures to identify these risks and properly manage them. It finds that:
  - Network Rail's System Operator managed the timetable process and was in the best position to understand and manage the risks, but did not take sufficient action, especially in the critical period in autumn 2017;
  - while the circumstances for Northern and GTR were quite different, neither were properly aware of or prepared for the problems in delivering the timetable and that they did not do enough to provide accurate information to passengers once disruption occurred;
  - DfT and ORR have responsibilities overseeing most aspects of the industry and neither organisation sufficiently tested the assurances that they received from the industry about the risk of disruption, despite having information and powers that would have allowed them to do so; and
  - the rail industry's processes for planning and managing major timetable changes do not adequately manage the risk arising from the engineering and other projects on



which they depend, or prioritise the impact on passengers when making decisions about these risks.

## Remit of the Inquiry

14. On 4 June 2018, the Secretary of State for Transport asked ORR, as the independent rail regulator, to undertake an Inquiry headed by ORR Chair, Professor Stephen Glaister CBE. The Inquiry was asked to review the reasons for the failed introduction of the new 20 May 2018 timetable.<sup>1</sup>
15. The Inquiry states in its terms of reference that it has three objectives to:
  - i. *"identify factors that contributed to the failure to develop and implement an effective operational timetable in May 2018;*
  - ii. *draw conclusions about the management of operational risks created by major timetable changes, based on evidence about the causes and consequences of the disruption in May 2018, and its subsequent management; and*
  - iii. *where appropriate, make recommendations to the industry and government in advance of future major network changes for the benefit of passengers, other users and railway staff."*
16. The Inquiry is being held under Section 51 (1) of the Railways Act 2005 and full terms of reference of the Inquiry are set out in Annex B.
17. The Inquiry is being held in addition to and alongside ORR's existing investigation into the compliance of Network Rail and the train operating with the terms of their licences in relation to the timeliness of the provision of timetable information to operators and passengers.
18. Alongside this interim report, ORR is publishing a separate Prior Role Review which examines ORR's relevant actions in preparation for the May 2018 timetable.

## Conduct of the Inquiry

19. The Inquiry has recognised the importance of producing and publishing findings quickly, in order that the industry can better take account of them when planning future timetabling changes. This document is therefore an interim publication that addresses points i. and ii. of the stated purpose of the Inquiry. Phase 2 of the Inquiry will set out the proposed way forward on the industry engagement required over the remainder of 2018 and beyond to fully satisfy part iii. of the Inquiry.
20. Within the timescales of this interim publication, we have invited contributions from a wide range of parties. We have received and reviewed over 2,000 pieces of documentation and other representations provided by the parties noted above, freight companies, rail industry representative bodies, trades unions, railway experts and the public.
21. We have commissioned survey data from rail users:
  - Independent quantitative research with over 1000 rail users
  - Over 2,200 responses to a web-based survey on the ORR website
  - 4 independent qualitative focus groups with affected passengers and interviews with front-line rail staff
22. As well as numerous discussions with parties noted above and other experts across the rail industry, the Inquiry has conducted more than twenty formal interviews with key parties, including:
  - Interviews with Transport Focus and London TravelWatch
  - 12 interviews with Train Operating Companies
  - 5 interviews with the DfT
  - Interviews with the Chairs of the Thameslink Independent Readiness Board and Thameslink Independence Assurance Panel
  - 6 interviews with Network Rail

1. <http://orr.gov.uk/news-and-media/press-releases/2018/orr-launches-independent-inquiry-into-may-timetable-disruption>



## Accuracy of information received & disclaimer

23. The information on which this interim report is based is that provided by the parties to the Inquiry noted above and not from ORR's own verified sources. This Inquiry has not been undertaken using ORR investigative powers that would legally require participants to provide all information they hold. The information on which the findings are based is only that which the parties have volunteered to share and we are grateful for their cooperation.
24. While facts used in this report have been cross-referenced with the parties and verified wherever possible, ORR cannot independently assure the accuracy of all of the information that it has received during the course of this Inquiry. In several cases, different parties have offered conflicting information or different interpretations of events and this report highlights where that is the case and whether the Inquiry has made judgements about the weight of conflicting information.
25. Because the findings in this report are drawn from the limited information received, they should not be relied upon for commercial, legal or regulatory purposes. Any regulatory action that ORR subsequently takes will be based on source material.
26. ORR will correct the record if we become aware that factual inaccuracies have occurred.

## Consultation on Phase 2 of the Inquiry

27. ORR welcomes feedback on the findings in this interim report, and the focus that it should take in considering the development of its final report and recommendations in Phase 2 of the Inquiry.

## Structure of this report

28. This interim report is arranged in three parts:
  - Part A – Passenger experience and impact  
This section of the interim report explains what happened on 20 May 2018 to passenger services and describes the impact that this had on passengers and other rail users, and front-line staff experience;
  - Part B – Our findings into the failure of the May 2018 timetable  
This section of the interim report makes findings about the causes of the disruption attributable to the different projects and processes that needed to be delivered by the rail industry in preparation for 20 May 2018, focusing on the infrastructure projects that the timetable change depended upon, the process of developing the timetable itself, and the preparedness of the train operating companies to implement the timetable.
  - Part C – Our broader findings into industry processes and systemic risks  
This section on systemic issues makes broader findings about the systems of governance that oversaw the rail industry process of planning and preparation for the timetable change, including the role of ORR, and identifies why these failed to adequately identify and manage the risks.



## Summary of findings

29. Below we have summarised our findings which are set out in full in Parts B and C of this report.

### Infrastructure Programmes

30. The May 2018 timetable changes in the regions predominantly served by the Northern and GTR networks relied on the delivery of two major infrastructure schemes. The North West Electrification Programme (NWEF) and the Thameslink Programme are intended to create transformational benefits for passengers in the north and the south east, combining new track, signalling, electrification of lines, upgraded stations and new rolling stock to increase the frequency and quality of services across London and the North West.
31. These programmes have been many years in their planning and development, and the structure and terms of the train operating franchises for Northern and GTR reflect the anticipated transformation of those networks over their term.
32. The Inquiry has examined whether any aspect of the development of these infrastructure schemes created risks resulting in the May 2018 disruption.

### The Thameslink Programme

33. The Thameslink Programme is intended to establish new cross-London services that will enable up to 24 trains per hour (tph) to operate in both directions from multiple destinations north and south of the Thames using new Class 700 rolling stock. It is intended to deliver new services, shorter journey times, reduced crowding on trains, and better interchange between services.
34. The development of the infrastructure required for the Programme has been delivered in two phases:
- Phase 1: the remodelling of Farringdon and Blackfriars stations which completed on time and on budget in 2011-12; and
  - Phase 2: included remodelling of London Bridge Station (which completed in January 2018) and introducing new track and signalling technology to enable 24tph trains per hour to operate through central London. Phase 2 is not yet complete, but important elements of it were required to be delivered in time to support the May 2018 timetable change.
35. In contrast to the experience in the North West, the Inquiry heard that the development of the Thameslink infrastructure required to be ready for the May 2018 timetable was completed on time. Participants to the Inquiry expressed considerable admiration for the way that Network Rail planned and delivered this extremely complex set of projects, while maintaining an operational railway during construction.
36. The Inquiry has found that the delivery of the necessary Thameslink infrastructure to support the May 2018 timetable was completed successfully and on time. The Inquiry has found no aspect of the delivery of the Thameslink infrastructure that contributed to the causes of the May 2018 timetable disruption.
37. The Inquiry has found that those elements of the Thameslink infrastructure that are still to be completed, including automatic signalling and turnbacks, are not material factors behind the May 2018 disruption because they were not relied upon in the specification of the timetable.
38. The Inquiry heard that one important piece of Thameslink infrastructure, the line through the Canal Tunnels in central London, opened one week later than planned in February 2018.
39. The Inquiry does not judge the one-week delay in the opening of the Thameslink Canal Tunnels in central London to be a material factor behind the disruption because it did not materially impede GTR's ability to prepare to introduce new services in time for May 2018.
40. The introduction into service of the new Thameslink timetable in May 2018, relied on more than the successful completion of the infrastructure projects. The delivery of these other projects and programmes, and their role in the causes of the Thameslink timetable disruption are discussed below.



## North West Electrification Programme

41. NWEF is being developed in four phases between 2014 and 2018, to electrify and upgrade the lines between Blackpool, Wigan, Bolton, Liverpool and Manchester. The completion of Phases 3 and 4 were needed to support the changes to the May 2018 timetable. The project is being delivered by Network Rail, and since 2016 has been overseen by the North of England Programme Board, chaired by the DfT.
42. There was a one-year delay between December 2016 and December 2017 to the delivery of the Phase 4 electrification scheme between Wigan, Bolton and Manchester (the 'Bolton Corridor'), while the infrastructure was risk assessed and then redesigned to legally comply with electrical regulations, or in some places safely deviate from the regulations, which are enforced by ORR. ORR considered that Network Rail should have designed the scheme to the legal standard earlier, or carried out risk assessments for proposed deviations. Network Rail had assumed that it would be permitted to deviate from those standards without a risk assessment.
43. The Inquiry considers that the redesigned delivery of the Bolton Corridor electrification was known about sufficiently early in 2016 to not be a direct contributory factor to the May 2018 disruption, and so has not focused further on the merits of the decision at the time. However, it did compress the remaining timescales available to complete the project, creating a higher level of risk for the remaining project as further delays occurred during 2017.
44. During 2017, unexpected problems occurred with Phase 4, as worse than expected ground conditions caused delays to the construction of the electrification infrastructure. Network Rail relied on a risk-based survey of ground conditions, which did not identify the true extent of sandy ground and uncharted mine works along the route. Many more attempts at driving piles failed than had been expected. Innovative engineering solutions were developed to try to recover the delay and the works were re-planned several times throughout 2017 as each plan proved to be unrealistic.
45. Timescales for project completion were further compressed, costs increased, and there was significant disruption to passengers as the operational railway was periodically closed to allow works to recover at an accelerated pace. Network Rail's confidence in project delivery by December 2017 was put under pressure throughout 2017, such that the P-80 confidence level on which projects are planned (80% probability of completion on time and budget) would only be achievable with considerably more time on site to do works, requiring greater possession of the railway and disruption to passengers.
46. The Inquiry has found that Network Rail's approach to planning the construction of the Phase 4 Bolton Corridor electrification did not accurately estimate the actual construction risks and probable delays to its completion. While these risks were potentially manageable in themselves, the consequential risks to the introduction of the May 2018 timetable were compounded by an excessively optimistic approach to planning and re-planning mitigating actions to catch up construction works as timescales were compressed during 2017.
47. The Inquiry has considered the extent to which the subsequent risks to the timetabling process were taken into account in the timing of decisions to replan the projects. We heard from participants that the focus of the North of England Programme Board was on the delivery of the infrastructure projects. It was not specifically remitted to focus on the management of consequential systemic risks to the timetabling process or introduction of services by train operators, although its members including Network Rail's System Operator (the SO) were aware of these issues. The risks were noted to the Board in October 2017 by the SO, but no sufficient actions were taken by the SO to mitigate these risks. The Inquiry has heard that the Programme faced substantial pressure from senior levels of Network Rail to not defer the milestone while there remained a chance of success, despite the increasing risks.



48. The Inquiry has found that the DfT's North of England Programme Board was aware of the consequential risks to the May 2018 timetable of a failure to deliver the Phase 4 infrastructure projects on time. While it was not remitted to manage systemic risks, it did not sufficiently consider aligning the timing of its decisions with the timetabling process, and Network Rail's System Operator did not press for this despite being aware of these risks.
49. The final attempt to catch up construction work in time for the introduction of the May 2018 timetable occurred over Christmas 2017, when a blockade of the Bolton Corridor (closing the railway so that intensive construction works could take place) failed to complete all of the work needed.
50. While 3 of 4 key projects were successfully achieved during this blockade in an enormous effort by Network Rail, further problems were encountered relating to wet ground conditions, causing a failure to complete all of the necessary foundation works. This meant that there were no acceptable options remaining to complete the works in time for the May 2018 timetable change without causing substantial disruption to passengers by closing the operational railway in early 2018. In January 2018 a decision was made by the North of England Programme Board to delay the completion of the project until after the point needed for the May 2018 timetable change.
51. The Inquiry has found that the decision to rely on the successful delivery of the Christmas 2017 works to recover Phase 4 of the North West Electrification Programme created substantial risks for the introduction of the May 2018 timetable, leaving no margin for error or unexpected problems during the Christmas blockade. The subsequent failure to deliver these works directly delayed the development of the timetable which caused disruption to passengers in May 2018.
52. During early 2018, works continued on Phase 3 of the North West Electrification Programme, including a blockade of the line between Blackpool and Preston, which caused substantial disruption to passengers during this period. A series of problems which were not reasonably foreseeable by Network Rail caused the line to be reopened three weeks later than planned. A significant consequence of this delay was that train drivers operating on that route needed to be retrained due to the terms and conditions in their contracts, although this is not a regulatory requirement. This led to fewer suitably trained drivers being available than necessary when the new timetable was introduced in May 2018, which contributed to the disruption.
53. The Inquiry has found that delays to the NWEF Phase 3 works in early 2018 were not reasonably foreseeable by Network Rail and that Northern Rail had no reasonable expectation that it would face a consequential shortage of drivers. This worsened the disruption in May 2018, in the Northern region, but was not a factor behind the need to rewrite the Northern timetable.

### Timetable development & the System Operator

54. Network Rail's System Operator business unit (the SO) is responsible for the production and publication of the national timetables, including the timetable for May 2018. It works with train operators and with Network Rail routes (who may want to access the network for engineering works, for example) to decide the best allocation of network capacity. In doing this, it translates train operators' access rights and the train paths that they bid for into the timetable according to the processes set out in Part D of the Network Code. It coordinates the process for establishing a base timetable twice a year and for making nearer-term changes to it (e.g. to accommodate engineering works, special events and ad-hoc requests from passenger, freight or charter services).
55. The Inquiry has heard that the SO had good visibility across Network Rail's business of the risks arising from the infrastructure programmes as a member of the relevant programme boards, and its managing director's position as co-chair of the national Portfolio Board, alongside a DfT director. It



noted these risks to the North of England Programme Board and to the rail industry's National Task Force at meetings in the autumn of 2017.

56. The Inquiry has found that the SO had sufficient information to understand the risks and potential for disruption arising from the infrastructure programmes, and that it was in a unique position in the industry to understand these dependent risks to the timetable process for which it was responsible.
57. The Inquiry has considered whether the SO managed the process of planning and developing the timetable with appropriate regard to the risk of disruption, and managed these risks so far that it was able within its own process of developing the timetable.
58. The very large number of timetable changes required for May 2018 fully consumed the resources of the SO's timetabling function as it prepared to deliver its timetable offer to the industry. Neither the SO or train operators had the reasonable ability to prepare alternative versions of the timetable to reflect different potential outcomes from the infrastructure programmes. The option to 'roll forward' existing timetables was also limited because of the nature of the infrastructure and rolling stock changes and the inter-dependence of these changes.
59. The assumptions that the SO made in autumn 2017 about the likely availability of the NWEP Phase 4 infrastructure in May 2018 were therefore critical to the successful execution of its timetabling function.
60. The Inquiry heard a circular argument between IP and the SO about whose responsibility it was to make these judgements. The project team explained that its focus was exclusively on infrastructure delivery. DfT chaired the Programme Board and said that it relied on the advice of these professionals about what was deliverable. All parties were aware of the risks, but the Inquiry judges that, on balance, the SO was in the best position to understand the risk to the timetable and that it was the only body able to make decisions about the assumptions that were used to create that timetable. This is because of its position as member of the Programme and Portfolio boards
61. The SO said that it was not remitted in autumn 2017 to advocate different decisions by the Programme Boards and DfT. It explained its belief that, had it decided in autumn 2017 not to assume that the NWEP infrastructure would be ready, it would have been 'overruled' in favour of the advice from the project team because it would have delayed benefits to passengers. This may or may not have been the case, but while it highlighted the risks to the project team and DfT, it was also the body best placed to consider and advocate alternative options, which it did not do. Following the disruption in May 2018, these are exactly the sorts of mitigating options that are being actively developed and considered by Network Rail in preparation for the December 2018 and May 2019 timetables, providing a counterfactual illustration of the missed opportunities in autumn 2017.
62. The Inquiry has found that the SO was the body best placed to address the risks associated with the delivery of NWEP Phase 4 upon its timetable process in autumn 2017, but has seen limited evidence that it considered or pro-actively advocated alternative options. This significantly increased the risk that it would not be able to meet the industry schedule for producing a timetable in time for May 2018.
63. In correspondence relating to ORR's investigation into whether Network Rail has complied with the terms of its licence (a regulatory process initiated in February 2018 and conducted separately from this Inquiry, which has found Network Rail in breach of its licence), Network Rail has described the measures that it is now taking to introduce additional oversight and assurance review processes across its business, which were not in place prior to May 2018. The Inquiry considers, as explained above, that the SO was uniquely positioned to have performed these roles in preparation for May 2018.



64. The Inquiry has found that the SO did not have in place sufficient co-ordinated processes, co-operation and system-wide oversight to manage the effective delivery of the scale of change required for May 2018, although Network Rail is now taking measures to correct this.
  65. The Inquiry has considered whether the SO and train operators took all reasonable steps to run a robust and efficient process in preparing the timetable once the scale of the challenge emerged in late 2017 and early 2018, with the resources and processes that were available to them at the time.
  66. The Inquiry has found that the System Operator's timetabling team, and those of passenger and freight operators, were placed under extreme pressure in early 2018 as the unprecedented extent and complexity of the need to rewrite the timetable became clear. The teams involved made extraordinary efforts to complete the work then required, without any reasonable options to reduce or mitigate the scale of the task at that late stage.
  67. The Inquiry has considered whether issues arising from the compliance with Part D of the Network Code contributed to the failure to introduce an operable timetable in May 2018. It has also considered whether Part D remains fit for purpose where major timetable changes are required, in contrast to the more incremental changes that are usually undertaken.
  68. The Inquiry has found that the schedule prescribed by Part D of the Network Code for the timetabling process was applied flexibly by the SO and by train operators in preparing the May 2018 timetable, but does not judge that flexibility is inappropriate in certain circumstances. As found earlier, it is critical that decisions about infrastructure projects avoid compressing the time available to develop the timetable, by being made in alignment with the Part D process, even if this schedule varies in different circumstances.
  69. The issue of whether compliance with Part D of the Network Code needs to be reviewed will be considered further in Phase 2 of the Inquiry.
- In particular, we propose to consider whether the management of risks to future timetable changes arising from major infrastructure or rolling stock programmes on which timetables are dependent can be accommodated through greater compliance with the Network Code.
70. The Inquiry has considered whether the overall capability and resources available to the SO are sufficient to deliver large timetable changes. This is also a focus of ORR's separate investigation into Network Rail's compliance with its licence requirements, and a feature of ORR's current Periodic Review of Network Rail.
  71. The Inquiry has found that the resources available to the SO could not reasonably have been increased at short notice to mitigate problems as they emerged in the timetabling process for May 2018. However, the SO could have done more to estimate the resource demands at a much earlier stage and consider other mitigations, as is now being done in anticipation of future timetable changes. ORR stated in its PR18 draft determination the need for additional SO resources in the next control period.
  72. We will consider the issue of the SO's long-term resources and capability further in Phase 2 of the Inquiry. We will also consider an issue that has been raised with the Inquiry regarding the use of technology to support the accuracy and efficiency of the timetabling process by the SO and train operators. However, we have found no evidence that this was a primary cause of the disruption in May 2018.
- ### Northern's preparedness to operate the 20 May 2018 timetable
73. The Inquiry has examined the role of the Northern train operating franchise in the timetabling process, and whether it did everything reasonably practicable in its preparations to introduce an operable timetable on 20 May 2018.
  74. On 5 January 2018, the Extraordinary North of England Programme Board decided that implementing a further closure of the railway to deliver NWEF Phase 4 for May 2018



would be too disruptive for passengers. As a consequence, Northern was required to fundamentally re-cast its timetable, with 16 weeks available to complete work that would normally take 40 weeks under the schedule in Part D of the Network Code.

75. At the end of January 2018, Northern sent Network Rail a wholly revised series of bids for the May 2018 timetable. These were resource-led as the absence of the expected electrical infrastructure on the line meant that availability of diesel rolling stock became the fundamental determinant in working services back into the 'Bolton corridor'. This affected almost the whole of Northern's network, completely changing the plan that Northern had anticipated introducing in May 2018.
76. At the beginning of February 2018, Northern formally requested that the SO consider rolling forward the national December 2017 timetable to May 2018, in order to simplify the changes required and mitigate risks from the already compressed timescales. However, Northern had no reasonable way of knowing how severe the eventual disruption would turn out to be. The SO considered that this was not practicable as the decision was being made in the context of contractual offers to other operators and other irreversible infrastructure and rolling stock changes.
77. The Inquiry has found that Northern engaged properly with Network Rail's timetabling process and the factors that caused the timetable to be re-planned at a late stage were outside its control. The Inquiry has reviewed evidence that Northern was immediately aware of the risks that this late replan could create and that it explored options with Network Rail to mitigate these by requesting a national roll-over of the December timetable. The Inquiry has been unable to undertake independent technical analysis about whether this was a viable option.
78. The Inquiry has considered Northern's preparations to introduce the revised timetable into service, including the measures taken to ensure the availability and planning of rolling stock and train crew, which the Inquiry heard were material factors in the May 2018 service disruption.
79. The failure to electrify the Bolton Corridor created challenges for Northern's planning of available rolling stock, creating a need for Northern to reallocate 47 diesel vehicles. This led to reduced capacity and resilience on Northern's services as diesel units were taken from planned capacity enhancements and contingency stock at depots. The compressed timescales resulted in less time for optimising the unit diagrams than originally planned and Northern has stated it is probable the attempt to expedite the process "did impact on the quality of the train crew diagrams".
80. The Inquiry has found that Northern took reasonable measures to ensure that services were covered by corresponding train units. Based on the evidence received, the Inquiry finds that the ability of train crew to operate the rolling stock was a greater factor in the May 2018 timetable delivery than the availability of the rolling stock itself.
81. Like GTR, the compression of timescales meant that Northern had insufficient time to complete fully developed, optimised and quality assured train crew diagrams prior to consultation with staff. Emergency rostering was adopted but a major displacement of staff and trains developed, resulting in the new timetable quickly falling over and the subsequent introduction of an interim timetable on 4 June.
82. The Inquiry found that in the lead up to the timetable change, Northern did not have train crew rosters that had been fully optimised or agreed with the unions. The Inquiry finds that Northern could not have reasonably accelerated the train crew diagramming process, which followed a rolling stock plan that had not been fully optimised.
83. Northern explained that there were factors which limited its level of resilience at this late stage, and the Inquiry considers that Northern had less potential to stress test and plan contingency into its approach to train crew planning than GTR had in early 2018. These included having finite training resource to deliver an increased number of required training days and removal of potential training



opportunities through extended engineering activity; for example in the Bolton Corridor over weekends. There were also some operational difficulties in managing drivers under different terms and conditions and the end of the rest-day working agreement on 21 February 2018, although these were known quantities that could have been managed.

84. The Inquiry has found that the compressed driver training timescales from the failure of NWE Phase 4 to electrify the Bolton corridor and the additional retraining burden of the NWE Phase 3 overrun were the primary causes of Northern's inability to arrange for a sufficient level of driver competency to operate an effective service from 20 May 2018, and that Northern was constrained in its ability to manage these in the limited time available.
85. The Inquiry has considered Northern's understanding of risks related to the successful delivery of the May 2018 timetable.
86. Northern was able to identify risks to the delivery of the May 2018 timetable at various stages in its development, and a number of these are listed in Northern's timetable readiness dashboards. Nevertheless, by 9 May 2018 Northern expressed its view to Transport for the North that it still expected to be able to run a full service from 20 May. The Inquiry has not been able to fully establish the basis on which Northern provided this assurance.
87. The Inquiry has found that in the lead up to the timetable change, Northern failed to adequately understand or communicate the risks arising from failing to have a sufficient number of trained drivers to operate the 20 May 2018 timetable. As a result, passengers faced severe disruption and were not provided with information that would have allowed them to manage the impact.
88. In parallel with the disruption caused by the failure of the May 2018 timetable, Northern services experienced additional disruption caused by an ongoing industrial relations dispute. This further exacerbated the impact on staff and passengers, and complicated the short-term planning of rolling stock and crews. However this was planned industrial

action and while it aggravated the impact of the timetable disruption, the Inquiry has seen no evidence to suggest that these on-the-day industrial relations issues were a primary causal factor behind the failure of the timetable itself.

### Northern's actions to mitigate the impact of disruption on passengers

89. The Inquiry heard that it became clear at a very early stage after 20 May, that Northern Rail had problems with the delivery of the timetable, so for the first two weeks there was a combination of planned changes and significant levels of unplanned cancellations based on available resources on the day. There were occasions when the train driver or conductor was delayed and services had to be cancelled without prior notice, even on services which were already full of passengers.
90. The company had a hotspot map of where disruption was greatest and deployed extra staff at those locations to provide additional customer service assistance and to also feed back into their gold command structure. Short-term planning measures were put in place based on this feedback and customer demand, resulting in additional shuttles and 'sweeper' trains for example on the Bolton corridor. Ticket acceptance arrangements were put in place on Metrolink and restrictions on advance purchase tickets lifted.
91. No additional arrangements were put in place for passengers who are disabled as many of the affected stations were staffed and they had the autonomy to make decisions. There are some examples that where trains were full, staff authorised use of taxis for vulnerable passengers. Nonetheless, the number of complaints received about accessibility issues increased and the impact on passengers who are disabled arising from inadequate information was severe.
92. There is some evidence to conclude that there was a failure to provide services to passengers requiring assistance, as well as examples of good practice in other places. The Inquiry has found that Northern acted quickly to

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introduce a revised interim timetable on 4 June, with more services operating than before 20 May, and that service reliability recovered somewhat.

### **Northern's provision of information to passengers during disruption**

93. The Inquiry heard that Northern was unable to ensure consistency of information across industry systems such as National Rail Enquiries and train company ticket engines. In the first week of the timetable change there were some routes where the Customer Information System (CIS) screens could not keep up with the amount of disruption. A two-hour cut-off for at-risk services was introduced; these services were cancelled to provide certainty to passengers and accurate information on CIS screens. The company used Twitter to provide updates every 30 minutes to front-line staff, adapting as required based on feedback from hot spot locations. Additional staff were deployed to help customers in line with procedures for normal large, planned events.
94. The Inquiry has found that information provided to passengers was inadequate which meant that passengers were unable to plan and make their journeys with any certainty. Whilst rail staff performed well in difficult and trying circumstances, the information provided to them for onward transmission to passengers was similarly inadequate; passengers often had the same inaccurate information.
95. The Inquiry has found that although Northern was aware that there would be problems in delivering the timetable in advance of its introduction and that there would be disruption to services, it did not warn passengers that this would be the case. Passengers were denied the opportunity to plan and make informed decisions about their journey.

### **Govia Thameslink Railway's preparedness to operate the new timetable**

96. The Thameslink, Southern and Great Northern (TSGN) train operating franchise awarded to Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR) in 2014 was unique in several respects. It was a particularly large franchise, combining operating areas from three earlier franchises. Further, it was structured as a management contract to provide commercial flexibility in the approach to the introduction of new passenger services delivered by the Thameslink Programme from May 2018 onwards, including the removal of revenue risk.
97. The complexity and ambition of the Thameslink Programme, including the intention to run up to 24tph in both directions through central London, meant that programmes to deliver new infrastructure, new rolling stock, the new timetable and preparations to meet the service specification in the franchise all needed to be developed in parallel and delivered in time for May 2018. The new services were initially intended to step up in frequency from 20tph to 24tph in May 2018 and December 2018 respectively, the higher specification being dependent on the completion of new automatic signalling technology which was not required for the lower frequency in May 2018.
98. In recognition of the complexity of the programme and the need to coordinate the introduction of the different elements, an Industry Readiness Board (IRB) was established by the Secretary of State in January 2017 at the recommendation of Chris Gibb, who also chaired the board. The IRB reported to the Thameslink Programme Board and both supported the idea that the DfT consider rephasing the introduction of services in May 2018 down to 18tph, in order to assure greater resilience and reliability of the new services, before then stepping up in three further phases in subsequent timetables to reach 24tph in December 2019.



99. There was an iterative process between GTR and DfT during which they considered the operational and commercial consequences of the rephasing proposal, which began when GTR submitted advice to DfT in May 2017, followed by a decision in principle communicated to GTR in August 2017, and final approval by the Secretary of State at the end of October 2017.
100. There is no evidence found by the Inquiry to suggest that the decision to replan the phased introduction of GTR's May 2018 timetable was driven by concerns in 2017 about GTR's operational capability or readiness.
101. The consequences for the timetabling process of the decision to move to 18tph were then realised to be more substantial than GTR, the SO or DfT had assumed. By October 2017, the development of the Thameslink timetable by the SO was well advanced, and the assumption by all parties was that the timetable could continue to be planned at a frequency of 24tph, before removing a further 2tph from the operating timetable in addition to the 4tph that were already expected to be removed. In practice, the consequence of this further removal of 2tph was to create severe gaps in service for some destinations that were considered to be unacceptable for passengers. This realisation meant that GTR had to rebid for a substantial rewrite of the timetable that was being developed, creating significant pressure on the timetable process and the System Operator.
102. In hindsight the only way in which these risks could have been avoided is for the advice on the re-planning of phasing to have been sought earlier. The commissioning of this advice by DfT was not triggered until after the creation of the IRB. This suggests that a more complete approach to understanding and managing system integration and risks would have been desirable at an earlier stage in the Thameslink programme, as explored further later in this report.
103. With regard to the decision to replan the phased introduction of the Thameslink timetable, and the consequences for the timetabling process, the Inquiry makes the following findings:
  - GTR and DfT were each driven by their legal responsibilities during the process that arrived at the decision to re-plan the phased introduction of GTR's services. This meant that GTR was obliged by DfT to bid into the timetable process on the basis of a service frequency higher than required before a final decision was made, while DfT sought evidence that reducing the frequency of services would not undermine the Thameslink business case and value for money.
  - Neither GTR nor the SO predicted that the decision to remove an additional 2tph from the planned May 2018 timetable would result in the need for a more substantial timetable rewrite, and the Inquiry has found that this created unfounded confidence that the timetable would not be put at risk.
  - Although DfT could not have reasonably foreseen the risk of needing to rewrite the timetable, the length of time taken by DfT to make a final decision meant that this decision was not aligned with the Part D schedule for developing the timetable. This aggravated the challenge of rewriting the timetable, even before the later failure to deliver the Northern Infrastructure Programme created even greater problems.
  - In hindsight, had the final decision by DfT to phase the introduction of services from 18tph been aligned with the schedule for developing the timetable in August 2017, the unpredicted consequences for the Thameslink timetable may have been avoided and the consequential risks of a timetabling failure on the scale experienced would have been greatly reduced.
104. This reinforces our earlier finding about the importance of making critical decisions about programmes on which the timetable depends in line with the schedule in Part D of the Network Code.
105. A substantial iterative rewrite of the timetable to deliver a regular service planned at 20tph,



but with 2tph temporarily removed was then required at the end of 2017. This began a long and complex process in which many errors and service conflicts with other operators needed to be resolved, as described in greater detail later in this report. As referred to above, by this late stage in the timetabling process the challenge facing the teams in the SO and GTR was substantial, even before the additional challenge of needing to replan the Northern timetable was known in January 2018, and participants in the Inquiry have been in consensus about the extraordinary effort imposed on both teams by the process.

106. The schedule set out in Part D of the Network Code requires the SO to issue new timetables to operators twelve weeks in advance of their introduction so that accurately timed tickets can be sold to customers and train operators can plan and roster rolling stock and crews. This 'T-12' date on 23 February was anticipated to be missed, but by early April the timetable was still under development as greater than expected operational conflicts were being resolved. GTR proposed to DfT a 'rolling deployment' of the new timetable, by removing additional services at first, before reintroducing them over a period of three weeks following 20 May 2018. DfT consented to this on 10 May, with the expectation by GTR that 80-100 services would initially be removed per day before being reintroduced.
107. The compression of timescales meant that GTR had insufficient time to complete fully developed, optimised and quality assured train crew diagrams prior to consultation with staff.
108. The Inquiry finds that GTR could not have reasonably accelerated the train crew diagramming process, which followed the late delivery of the timetable from the SO.
109. GTR has provided the Inquiry with counterfactual analysis which suggests that with more time it could have developed better optimised driver plans that worked within its overall driver numbers. However the Inquiry cannot say with confidence that GTR would have been able to deliver a stable and reliable service if provided with a robust timetable at an earlier stage.
110. GTR had predicted as early as 2016 that it would not have enough drivers trained to be ready for May 2018, and planned mitigations accordingly. Even before the compression of the timetabling process, GTR was planning to use the 'workaround' of pilot drivers through central London to overcome the expected shortage of trained drivers on the new routes.
111. These mitigations had to be re-planned several times in the weeks prior to the new timetable. Nevertheless, GTR remained confident in its ability to operate services with only limited disruption and was surprised in the final days that its mitigations were insufficient. Mitigations were planned and re-planned on a responsive basis as new information became known.
112. The Inquiry has explored GTR's approach to preparing and stress testing its plans, and found that GTR's approach to predicting the risks around required driver numbers failed to reflect the real risks that it faced. GTR told us that it planned the level of driver resourcing using historical experience and 'professional judgement'. It did not apparently stress test its plans in light of realistically known risks about the exceptional nature of the May 2018 timetable change, or the gradual compression of the time available to them to develop optimised driver diagrams. The Independent Assurance Panel which reported to the Industry Readiness Board also failed to adequately challenge GTR on these plans when it examined them, despite identifying driver availability as a critical risk.
113. The Inquiry concludes that GTR had greater opportunity, in comparison with Northern, to plan and prepare its approach to driver training availability at an earlier stage, and that:
  - GTR's initial approach to planning and training drivers did not adequately recognise the exceptional scale of change and the risks arising from the May timetable;
  - GTR's plans were not adequately stress tested by either GTR or the DfT's Thameslink programme management boards, even



as the time available to prepare driver diagrams was reduced; and

- Sufficient contingency was not prepared for in advance, and was not available as problems emerged.

114. It is impossible for the Inquiry to judge whether, had this been done, GTR would have been able to fully compensate for the late finalisation of the timetable and manage the problems that arose from inefficient driver diagrams. The length of the Thameslink Programme and the knowledge that the May timetable change would be significant gave GTR a much greater ability to prepare and test its plans than Northern had. Earlier stress testing of the risks and knowledge of the likely shortage of drivers would have given GTR some opportunity to further understand and communicate the likelihood of disruption to passengers.
115. The Inquiry has found that GTR did not adequately understand the magnitude of the risks around driver resources. GTR gave assurance to the industry and government based on inadequate understanding of the risks. The assurances that it gave were in good faith but wrong.

## GTR response to passengers following 20 May

### GTR's action to mitigate the impact

116. The Inquiry heard that, close to the timetable change, GTR found that it would not be possible to run the full service immediately and PDF timetables showing the later introduction of some services were produced. GTR stated that it started to have problems from 23 May. The service was poor in week two of the timetable but the impact on passengers was lessened due to the school half-term break. On the third week, GTR started to identify real impacts with significant gaps in services.
117. In some areas a single Thameslink service replaced local stopping services previously operated by Southern and Great Northern, which led to large gaps in services. The Inquiry heard that every effort was taken to run additional trains where crew and stock permitted. Sometimes this involved running services at short notice, meaning that trains which had been showing as cancelled or that had been deleted from passenger information systems did actually run.
118. As there were large gaps in some train services, standby buses were introduced at some locations. Restrictions on the use of taxis were relaxed so that station staff could arrange them where passengers were facing extended waits. A station feed e-mail thread was set up which allowed staff to contact control to advise of crowding at their station or to request stop orders. Ticket acceptance was quickly introduced between Southern, Thameslink and Great Northern but there were delays in arrangements on Gatwick Express as it had to be agreed with DfT.
119. The Inquiry has found that trains ran without prior notice, information about intermediate stations or platform information. Although running additional trains where crew and stock permitted was a good response to passenger needs, doing so without providing any prior information was unhelpful. The use of special stop orders was a reasonable and proactive short-term response to addressing passenger needs. The specific arrangements put in place for disabled passengers who had booked assistance was positive and welcome. Nonetheless, the impact on these passengers arising from inadequate information would have been particularly severe.

### GTR's provision of information to passengers during disruption

120. The Inquiry heard that none of the lists of cancelled trains were communicated to passengers who were told to check journey planners frequently; by 10pm in the evening and then again in the morning. Trains were deleted so that they did not appear on screens as cancelled; at busy stations there was a risk that the list of cancelled trains would hide those that were running. GTR used the term "operational incident" to describe the issues with services in preference to "a shortage of train crew" as it felt that the issue was crews



in the wrong place rather than insufficiency of numbers.

121. Knowing that it was exam time for some students, GTR contacted schools in the area to ensure that students could get to their exams. The solution was a combination of trains, buses and taxis. Further resource was added to the social media team to respond to tweets and provide on-the-go travel support as passengers could not always rely on the information they were seeing and there was an escalation in tweets from them to GTR.
122. During the morning and evening peak there was a management presence at stations with the objective of trying to provide explanations to customers. Ticket inspectors or passenger hosts were also positioned on stations, supplemented by the rail enforcement officers if there were security problems. In response to passenger feedback at key stations such as Harpenden additional staff were deployed. Extra staff were also added at St Pancras to address issues of overcrowding and to resolve any safety issues by opening gates where there was a potential risk.
123. The Inquiry has found that information provided to passengers was inadequate which meant that passengers were unable to plan and make their journeys with any certainty. GTR's realisation that the timetable was not working as planned was not communicated effectively to passengers who were given no assurance that the company had the situation under control.
124. GTR carried out a detailed programme of engagement in the months prior to the launch of the new timetable. GTR's communications plan in particular was detailed and extensive, and the Inquiry's research showed that levels of awareness amongst passengers in advance of the change was high.
125. The Inquiry has found that although GTR was aware that there would be problems in delivering the timetable in advance of its introduction and that there would be disruption to services, it did not properly warn passengers that this would be the case. Passengers were

denied the opportunity to plan and make informed decisions about their journey.

## Systemic risks and their management

126. The Inquiry has sought to understand whether elements of the industry's organisation and processes may have contributed to an environment in which risks to successful implementation of the May 2018 timetable were greater than they could have been. Information received by the Inquiry suggests that risks were often underestimated or not understood at all because they were interdependent and systemic in nature, rather than being owned by individual parties.
127. These issues will be a focus for Phase 2 of the Inquiry as we work towards recommendations for change.
128. Participants in the Inquiry have suggested that industry processes, which have generally been successful for the past twenty years, have revealed weaknesses in the preparation and implementation of the May 2018 timetable because of the scale and complexity of the infrastructure changes combined with the volume of consequential timetable changes required. If this is the case then it is important because major network changes will continue to influence future timetables, driven by unprecedented levels of investment in new infrastructure and rolling stock currently underway or being planned.
129. Major train service change such as for May 2018, and planned future timetables, is dependent on the parallel delivery of at least four major programmes, which are currently each subject to separate governance and assurance processes. These are:
  - The commissioning of new infrastructure (usually developed by Network Rail under Programme Management Boards chaired by the DfT, but this can also be led other authorities like Crossrail, TfL or independent developers outside the DfT's programme structure);
  - the specification and tendering of franchises, with service specifications embedded in contracts (let by DfT and



- devolved authorities in Scotland, Wales or Northern England);
  - the procurement and introduction of new rolling stock (which can be commissioned by DfT, other devolved commissioning authorities, or train operators); and
  - timetable development (led by Network Rail's System Operator).
130. These elements cannot afford to be considered separately because they are interdependent. Delay or changes to one element forces change in the others, but industry processes are not built to accommodate this. As noted earlier in this report, the System Operator was in the best position for May 2018 to manage dependent risks between infrastructure programmes and timetable development, as described earlier. The body that has greatest visibility of all dependent elements is DfT. However, while DfT is responsible for making big decisions about projects and changes to them, and is accountable for most of the costs, it is the industry that best possesses the information and capability needed to manage these and advise DfT about them. This did not happen at the rights points in advance of May 2018.
131. The Inquiry has found that the diffuse nature of accountability for different programmes across the industry and government results in a lack of clarity about roles and responsibilities for the oversight and control of complex system risks. There is an apparent gap in industry responsibility and accountability for the management of systemic risks, and industry process needs to change to accommodate these responsibilities.
132. The inquiry has considered whether the programme management structures created following the Bowe Review and chaired by DfT are structured and sufficiently remitted to consider dependent risks arising from the interaction of the multiple programmes.
133. The Inquiry considers that the creation of the DfT-chaired Programme Boards was a necessary strengthening of infrastructure programme governance and control of costs. However, the Boards are focused on the development of infrastructure and are not remitted to consider systemic risks arising from the programmes. The creation by DfT of the Thameslink Industry Readiness Board was a recognition of the importance of focusing on system integration issues, and demonstrated that a more integrated approach can help avoid risks. However, the IRB model is not a sufficiently integrated or resourced approach to be an alternative to integration of systemic risks into formal programme management architecture. Among other things, a stronger focus on systemic risks may drive better alignment between the timing of programme decisions and the schedule for timetable development.
134. Phase 2 of the Inquiry will consider, in consultation with all industry parties, whether further measures should be taken to oversee and manage systemic risks arising from interdependence rail programmes, including franchising, rolling stock and non-Network Rail led schemes. It will also specifically address the question of the role of independent regulation.

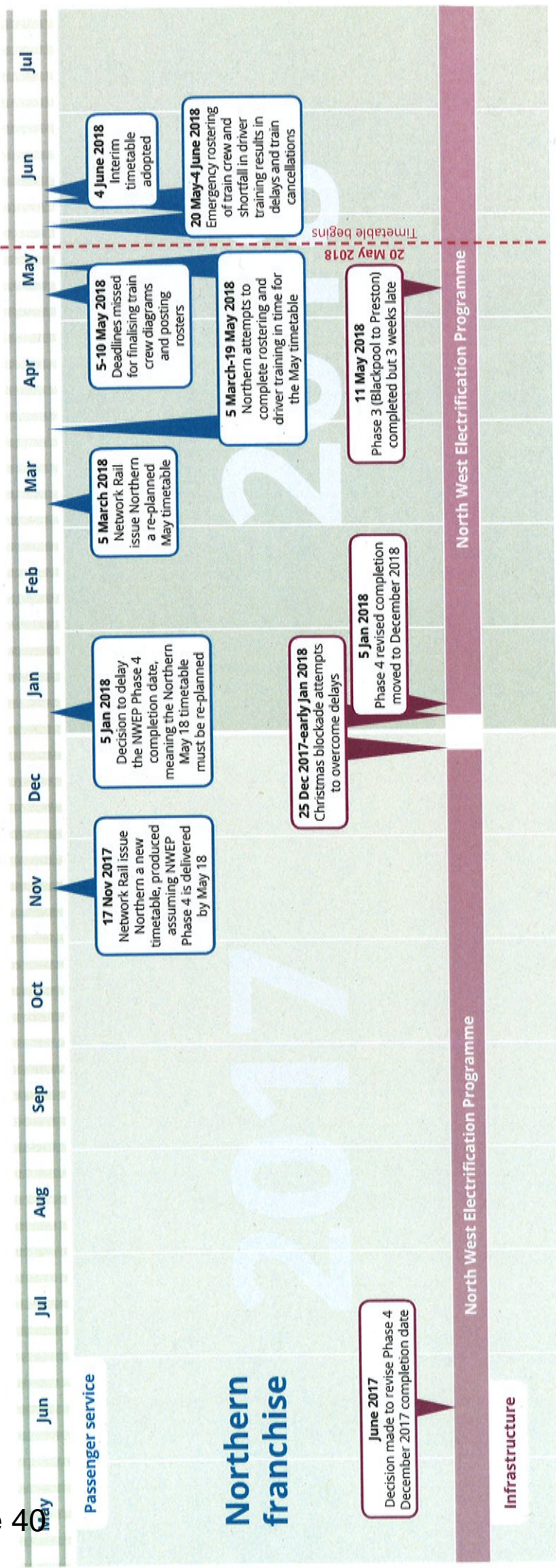
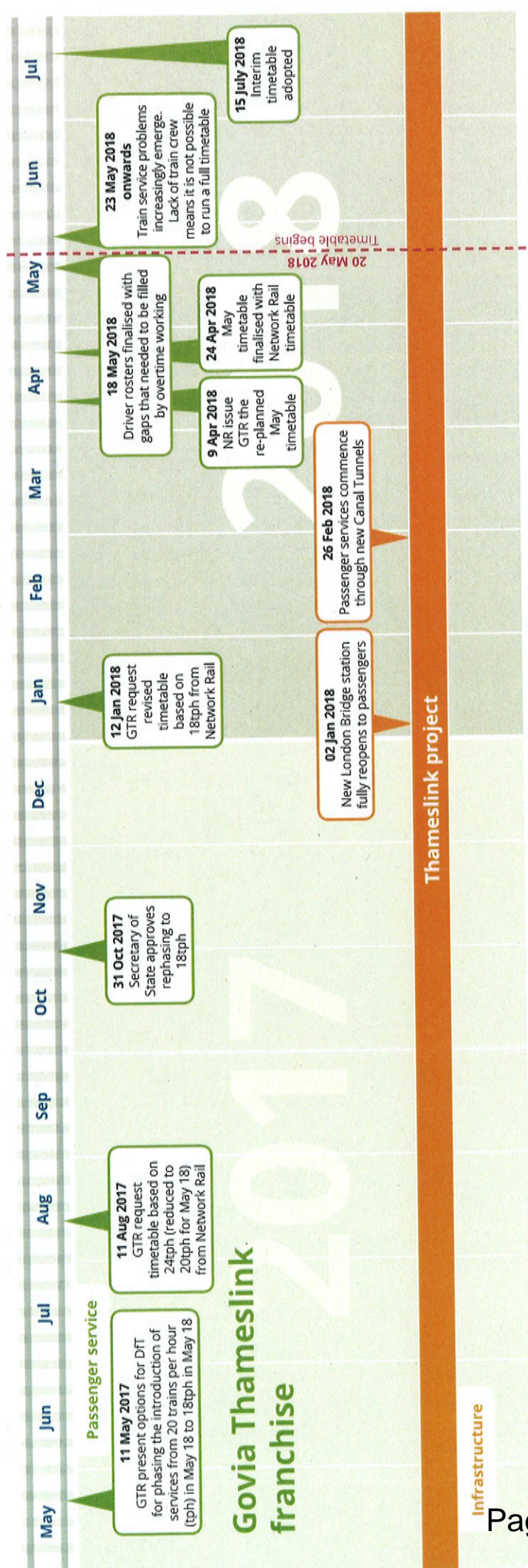
## The role of regulation and the ORR

135. Alongside this Inquiry, ORR established a 'Prior Role Review' to investigate actions that ORR took which may be material to the disruption in May 2018. That is published alongside this report.
136. ORR is the independent economic and safety regulator for Britain's railways. It is accountable to Parliament and the public to protect the people who use, interact with or work on the railway. It regulates Network Rail including the setting of targets it has to achieve and reports regularly on its performance. It also enforces consumer law and certain consumer requirements in train operator licences.
137. ORR does not have the powers or visibility to consider systemic risk across the whole industry, because it does not have regulatory powers to oversee franchise terms, rolling stock contracts or DfT decisions with regard



- to the oversight or change control of Network Rail's enhancement projects. However, it does oversee Network Rail's compliance with the terms of its network licence and so has visibility of both the infrastructure programmes and the timetable process which depended on them for May 2018. It also enforces consumer law and certain consumer requirements in train operator licences.
138. ORR exercises these responsibilities through a process that escalates from regular monitoring and reporting on Network Rail's delivery of its regulated outputs (set in 5-yearly Periodic Reviews), targeted investigations of potential failings to deliver these, followed by enforcement action if failings are found.
  139. In light of the emerging delays to the process for developing the May 2018 timetable following the failure to deliver the NWEF programme on time in December 2017, ORR initiated an investigation into Network Rail's compliance with its licence with regard to the timetabling process. This focused on the risks to passengers from the SO's inability to then provide a timetable in time for the T-12 date from which services are planned and tickets sold.
  140. ORR's approach in monitoring Network Rail's preparation for the timetable was to assure itself that Network Rail was properly consulting with industry partners through its decision-making. We saw the options that Network Rail was considering in February 2018 for the May timetable and considered that we had no additional knowledge or any basis to challenge these or suggest alternatives. We checked that Network Rail had consulted train operators in considering these options and were satisfied that it had been through a processes that had considered criteria including passenger impact. We did not conduct further analysis beyond this.
  141. ORR did not predict the potential disruption that occurred in May 2018 because it derived its information from the industry, which itself did not predict the disruption before it occurred. ORR also considered that Network Rail was working cooperatively with the industry in early 2018 when it was deciding whether to proceed with the May 2018 timetable change or not.
  142. The Inquiry has found that ORR has sufficiently broad powers that it could consider the risks that Network Rail's infrastructure programmes create for timetable changes if it chose to do so. It has not previously identified this as a critical risk or priority based on previous largely successful timetable changes. ORR failed to identify this risk in the approach to the May timetable change, including through the investigation that it initiated into Network Rail, which correctly focused on the potential impact on passengers but did not focus on risks to operational preparedness.
  143. Through Phase 2 of the Inquiry, ORR will consider whether, alongside changes to the management of systemic risks across Network Rail, the wider rail industry and government, the role of the regulator also needs to change, in particular where stronger independent assurance is thought to be required for timetable changes.
  144. It is reasonable to consider whether the ORR should have acted sooner to investigate risks to the timetable process as delays to the infrastructure projects emerged in 2017. It is also reasonable to consider whether the scope of ORR's subsequent investigation was sufficiently broad, given that it did not focus on the risk of disruption to operators and consequential impact on passengers from the late timetable.







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## **ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY SELECT COMMITTEE**

### **THE ROLE OF HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**Author:** Trevor Mason, Team Leader – Strategic Transport & Rail,  
Hertfordshire County Council

#### **1. Purpose of Paper**

This paper sets out Hertfordshire County Council's position in regard to rail services, with particular reference to Stevenage.

#### **2. Background**

Hertfordshire County Council is the transport and highway authority for the area, but it has no statutory powers in regard to railways.

The council considers the railways as an essential element of the overall transport network, noting that the rail mode share in Hertfordshire for work trips is 16%. Over 60,000 people commute out of the county by rail each day, with 12,000 commuting into Hertfordshire. The county council therefore wishes current service levels to be maintained and, where possible, improved.

Stevenage is the third busiest station in Hertfordshire, with 4.5 million passengers per year.

#### **3. Rail Policy**

The county council's overall policy for rail is set out in the Local Transport Plan, adopted in May 2018. The policy wording is as follows:

The county council will support and promote rail use in the county, especially in order to reduce car use. To do this it will:

- a) Work with the rail industry and other partners to seek improvements to train services in regards to capacity, journey times, frequency and range of destinations served.
- b) Work with the rail industry and other stakeholders to make rail travel more attractive through improved fares and ticketing, upgraded station facilities and better access and interchange by sustainable modes of transport.
- c) Support Community Rail Partnerships in the county.
- d) Publish a Rail Strategy setting out how the county council's objectives can be achieved.



#### **4. Rail Strategy**

As referenced in the policy, the county council publishes a Rail Strategy which sets out its aspirations for developing rail services. The current Rail Strategy was published in June 2016, with an update expected in late 2018 or early 2019.

The county council's top priorities for the East Coast route as set out in the Rail Strategy are:

- “secure better long distance connections from Stevenage to the north from the new InterCity franchise and progress comprehensive development of Stevenage Transport Hub to support Stevenage’s increasing importance as a growing population and employment centre, and its enhanced role as an interchange hub.
- “further build on the GTR plans by promoting service improvements (capacity, frequency, speed) through development of ‘Hertford Loop Metro’ to take advantage of the new Stevenage turnback platforms and new rolling stock, and develop Stevenage as a transport hub.
- “HS2 Phase 2 will relieve capacity pressure on the ECML from 2033 onwards. The county council will develop plans and lobby for increased long distance stops at Stevenage and increased local service frequency and capacity at other key stations”.

The Rail Strategy also sets out the county council’s support for the following proposals:

- The development of a new station building at Stevenage which will be integrated into the wider town centre development;
- The implementation of the Thameslink Programme to increase services and connections at Stevenage;
- A new station in south Stevenage (on the Hertford Loop), as promoted by Stevenage Borough Council.

#### **5. Links with GTR**

Hertfordshire County Council continues to maintain good links with Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR), the local train operator serving Stevenage. The county council holds quarterly meeting with GTR to discuss operational issues and opportunities for further development. Periodically GTR is invited to update the county council’s elected members through the Growth, Infrastructure, Planning and



the Economy Cabinet Panel, most recently at the meeting held on 20 September 2018.

The county council also attends the Thameslink Programme Stakeholder Group, which provides an input to the current upgrade programme.

## **6. Other Links with the Rail Industry**

The county council maintains links with the wider rail industry, either on an on-going or ad hoc basis as appropriate. For Stevenage the relevant links include:

- Dialogue with Network Rail on the development of the Stevenage Turnback scheme, which will provide the necessary capacity for services from the Hertford Loop;
- Dialogue with GTR on developing the replacement bus service on the Hertford Loop to Stevenage which will be required from May 2019 until the Stevenage Turnback scheme is delivered.
- Membership of the East Coast Mainline Authorities (ECMA) group.

## **7. Links with Rail User Groups**

The county council will support recognised rail user groups, and in recent years has taken a more active stance in seeking their views to help develop its own responses to consultations on new franchises and timetable changes. There are 50 railway stations in Hertfordshire and therefore it is difficult for the county council to be aware of all the local issues without the input from the user groups.

The county council will generally champion the issues raised by the rail user groups where this accords with the Rail Strategy. However, in cases such as timetable changes where improvement to services at one station may be detrimental to others, the county council will need to take a strategic view.

The county council currently has active links with seven rail user groups across Hertfordshire, and engages with collective groups such as Railfuture.

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