BCA & APTU Webinar 30 November 2021

Neil's back to basic sets of questions for the start

1. When you look back over last 12 months, what are you most proud of?
2. What wouldn't you do (the same way) next time?
3. What is the biggest challenge you face in the next twelve months?

To Network Rail
4. During 2020 on several bank holidays there were blockades of the MML to allow work on the new Brent Cross station. Are there any blockades planned for 2022 – for either Brent Cross or other works?
5. Following the publication by the DfT of the Integrated Rail Plan last week, the MML electrification is to go ahead North of Market Harborough. May members have further details please & likely timescales (note: only a brief update is needed). Also, please cover the plans to upgrade the overhead south of Bedford to 125mph running – when, closures etc
6. We understand that work on the new footbridge at St Albans City Station will commence over the Christmas holiday. Is this still on schedule and when will it be ready for customers to use?
7. What is the purpose for the several white boxes on the platforms at St Albans City Station?
To both GTR and EMR
8. As a result of the pandemic travel patterns have changed especially during the peaks. Have there been any discussions with the DfT as regards amending the present Peak travel ticket restrictions – eg for Mondays & Fridays – and also for being more consistent between routes (without imposing the highest cost option!)
9. The Thameslink Express concept (Bedford, Luton & St Albans only) still lives on, albeit only until 10 December. This is an acknowledged timetabling mistake during the last timetable refresh. In a similar vein, changing the 07:44 from Flitwick so it starts at Bedford is not happening until 13 December. Why is it that it is so difficult to correct these sort of errors between timetables? (Will, whilst the described examples are Thameslink unique, and we'll start with Tom, no doubt you will want to call out some EMR specifics on top).
10. What are your current challenges with increasing the availability for productive work of your current drivers (with answers in two parts, Covid centred challenges such as training (Will, it would be good to hear a comment or two on challenges with EMR Connect) and also weekend coverage.
11. *The specifics are a question for GTR, but, I am likely to ask EMR for a top up, given much of your market is different* There is a big push on to encourage e-ticketing, whether that is Smartcard based, Bank contactless card or PDF (QR code) based. For many passengers this is a preferred option as it is convenient and there is no need to collect a physical ticket. However, for some passengers, these choices are not wanted, and others, not realistic (eg not a computer user [not a Smartphone user, for on the move purchases]); or find ticket machines daunting & unusable. How are these customers being looked after? – eg to ensure ticket office queuing time is acceptable (a challenge at St Albans, particularly when just two windows open and one is engaged in a longer transaction). 12. Have you thought of having a concierge at the ticket machines to help customers – eg between 9:15am and 11:15am Mon to Sat?
13. *The specifics are a question for GTR, but, I am likely to ask EMR for a top up, given much of your market is different* And on e-ticketing, and Smartcard usage in general (in advance of the "grand plan): • Any news on extending contactless to station Luton to Bedford inclusive • On adding day Travelcards to the Key (either as a conventional ticketing product or an extension of Pay as You Go) • How are sales of the Flexi-Season going

To GTR
14. Can you match your flexible commuter tickets with a flexible car park ticket as Greater Anglia have done?
15. Have there been thought on offering car park tickets as a simple add-on to train tickets?
16. What is the latest situation in the retrofitting of Wi-Fi and seat back tables on the class 700's to bring them into line with other modern trains? (Concentrate more on Wi-Fi than seat back tables, and cover off how they would be paid for – ie increased leasing costs or XYZ etc)
(Please talk separately about consistency of processing and challenges specific to postal)
17. If we travel together and are delayed, I post two claims at the same time into the same post box. I quite often receive different replies from hers or none at all. We have made a total of six claims in past few weeks for three pairs of journeys. I have received one voucher, and two claims have gone unanswered. My wife has received two vouchers, and one claim has been declined. The answers are obviously inconsistent. Why are these differences occurring – surely there should be consistent treatment, even if the postal service does not deliver them to Thameslink as a "pair"?
18. On the question of paper tickets, why are tickets frequently not opening barriers, especially at weekends? TravelCards are the worse. Not a new phenomenon but appears to be getting worse.
19. What is being done to reduce noise from the trains at St Pancras, particularly at the south end, where announcements are often inaudible, and staff are having to wear ear defenders! is sound proofing on the ceiling practical?
20. We are still hearing regular examples of shortfalls on disruption response – eg • Skip stopping that at times with a big impact and long service gaps • The driver sometimes then makes the announcement after he has closed the doors! Example 17.25 fast to Bedford 20 November became an all stations and took 50 minutes (NM: this will be to Harpenden) • When a service southbound becomes a Blackfriars terminator, (!) Staff member on duty at Harpenden (20th Nov) was checking destination on own mobile(!) why does its onward dispatch empty working from Blackfriars take so long that the preceding train enters the platform behind it and is then subject to delay?
21. What is being done to improve consistency of delivery?
22. Are there any investments planned to improve incident recovery – eg more cross overs?
23. Are there any plans to revise train stopping points? – eg at Blackfriars, 8 car trains stop closest to the secondary (south exit).
24. What is the latest situation on your impending Passenger Services Contract, and will it directly impact on passengers (services, station staffing hours etc etc)?
25. How do you see the timetable evolving over 2022 (May, December and interim changes)
To EMR
26. May ask you GTR's first two questions
27. What is the latest on the "Corby Electrics" refurbishment & will the initial unit chosen for the necessary work be shown to RUGs, before further units are dealt with? (Do include the no First Class rationale). Specifically, cover • Wifi • Seat back power • Number of toilets per unit (as the current single toilet per unit is a problem when it breaks down)
28. The first off peak train at Bedford – 9:40 often seems to be late arriving into London. With the result I miss my connection. Why is this, does the timetable require change and/or to be more robust?
29. Will the considerable time until you get a Passenger Services Contract directly impact on passengers (services, station staffing hours etc etc)?
30. How do you see the timetable evolving over 2022 (May, December and interim changes)