



Dear Friend

In this edition, we cover:

Timetable 2018.....	1
<i>Detailed timings</i> .....	1
<i>APTU Draft response</i> .....	2
<i>Responding to the questionnaire (a reminder)</i> .....	3
Compensation update .....	3
Recent performance.....	4
<i>Driver numbers</i> .....	5
<i>Network Rail performance – ORR assessment</i> .....	5
Ticketing – Smartcards & Carnets .....	6
Class 700s.....	7
London Thameslink tickets – Underground inter-availability.....	7
Industrial relations.....	8
<i>The Underground</i> .....	8
Hertfordshire Transport Vision 2050 .....	8
Transforming Stations (moving staff out of the ticket office) .....	9
Class 319 heating .....	9
Transport Select Committee “Improving the rail passenger experience”.....	9
London Luton Airport and East Midlands Trains stopping pattern .....	10
Midland Mainline Electrification .....	10

### Timetable 2018

Thank you for the comments I received on the structure of the timetable; these have helped populate the content of our response. In this edition, I comment on the more detailed timings and share a draft of our response (if you want to look at my earlier comments, they are here: [aptu.org.uk/memberversions/aptunews\\_20161026.pdf](http://aptu.org.uk/memberversions/aptunews_20161026.pdf)).

To view the consultation documents, I recommend the Southern website as this contains an additional FAQ document not (yet) on the Thameslink site. The URL is [southernrailway.com/your-journey/timetable-consultation](http://southernrailway.com/your-journey/timetable-consultation).

#### Detailed timings

The first point to note is that the GTR documents showing service volumes are inaccurate in places, and we therefore engineered our own version. You may view the result of our work as:

- As PDF [aptu.org.uk/memberversions/gtr2018ttable\\_tlnth\\_nowvsplanned.pdf](http://aptu.org.uk/memberversions/gtr2018ttable_tlnth_nowvsplanned.pdf)
- In Excel [aptu.org.uk/memberversions/gtr2018ttable\\_tlnth\\_nowvsplanned.xlsx](http://aptu.org.uk/memberversions/gtr2018ttable_tlnth_nowvsplanned.xlsx)

(Note: only the Excel version shows the differences: they have been omitted from the PDF version for brevity).

The planned service pattern shows, with three exceptions in the evening peak, an increase in trains calling at stations:

- Morning Peak - increases ranging from 14% (Luton Airport Parkway) to 60% (Mill Hill Broadway).
- Evening Peak - ranging from a reduction of 14% (Harlington), through two no changes (Cricklewood and Hendon) to an increase of 60% (Mill Hill Broadway).

Before I look at the detail, some definitions:



- Semi-Fast: West Hampstead and all stations Mill Hill Broadway to Luton (in the current timetable, these occasionally extend to Bedford).
- Fast: Optionally West Hampstead, then St Albans and all stations to Bedford.
- Flyer: St Albans, Harpenden, Luton, Leagrave or Flitwick and then Bedford.
- 'Peak': Represents a 3 hour period (0700/0959 and 1600/1859).

Headline items are:

- A big increase in the semi-fast services - in the morning peak from 7 to 12 and in the evening peak from 4 to 12.
  - Current Mill Hill Broadway counts are 2 less in the morning peak and 1 less in the evening peak, hence this station 'headlining' the increase.
- Leagrave gets 'flyer' services in the evening peak. These only omit one stop (Luton Airport Parkway) so the major benefit is an increase in services rather than a time saving.
- Harlington's service increases in the morning peak by 2, but reduces in the evening peak, also by 2. However, this is not really that significant as both losses are semi-fasts, with 10 previous stops from St Pancras ('Fast' services have 5 prior stops).

I do not regard this as significant and do not propose to comment.

- The consultation documents show a service reduction in fast services from St Pancras from 6 to 4 in the 1900-1959 hour. We are told by the GTR timetable team that there will be 2 additional 'Flyer' services in this hour.

We have commented on the importance of these services being retained

- Luton Airport Parkway loses the few 'Flyer' services it currently receives (2 in each of the morning and evening peaks), but still gets a service increase; as all services are now 'Fast' or 'Semi-Fast', whilst the latter add 4 stops, morning 'Semi-Fasts' will almost certainly offer a guaranteed seat.
  - Luton Airport's study seeking 4 East Midlands Trains per hour observes how the travel pattern (by time of day) is very different: "In this context, it is important to note that the vast majority of LLA's demand is 'contra peak', falling outside commuter times to London. Many of the airport's early morning departures require passengers to arrive before 07:00, and a majority of the airport's arrivals present passengers into the rail system well after the 'off-peak' has begun. 89% of passengers from the airport arrive in London after 09:00. 80% of passengers departing St Pancras for LLA do so outside the evening peak of 16:00-19:00" (see also page 10).

### APTU Draft response

Our draft response is here:

- In Word [aptu.org.uk/memberversions/gtr\\_timetable2018\\_aptudraftresponse.doc](http://aptu.org.uk/memberversions/gtr_timetable2018_aptudraftresponse.doc)
- As PDF [aptu.org.uk/memberversions/gtr\\_timetable2018\\_aptudraftresponse.pdf](http://aptu.org.uk/memberversions/gtr_timetable2018_aptudraftresponse.pdf)

If you have comments on the draft response, please send them through by the **evening of Monday 5 December** - or earlier if they are significant so we can have a bit of a dialogue by email.



## Responding to the questionnaire (a reminder)

I encourage you to respond directly - if you agree with our views, then feel free to 'borrow' our words.

Firstly, remember that there is often less point in asking for a single change - we will often need to ask for "More of A, Less of B, please" - the destination of the Luton semi-fasts is a good example - if we were, theoretically, to ask that they run on the Catford Loop, then that would mean that we are also saying "please restrict train length to 8 carriages".

The due date / time is 5pm on 8 December. The best way to respond is online ([surveymonkey.co.uk/r/2018timetableconsultation](https://surveymonkey.co.uk/r/2018timetableconsultation)). You will notice that the questionnaire starts at Question 14 in the consultation document. Questions 1 to 13 gather information about the respondent. GTR have strongly emphasised that questions are voluntary so there is no need to respond to irrelevant questions and/or on topics that you do not have a view on.

Furthermore, GTR have told us that responses that are not made via the online survey will be uploaded by them to the online survey. It is therefore important that comments submitted by other methods map to the questions asked - if they do not, they are likely to receive less emphasis.

## Compensation update

We have heard no more about the plan for compensation after 15 minutes delay.

GTR told us today that at present it is taking around two weeks for Delay Repay claims to be processed. A colleague Rail User Group asked them about stories of postal claims taking up to 3 months; the GTR response was that they were scanned on the day of receipt and then processed to the same timeframes as on-line claims, so they should only take a few more days than standard. Even so, I think submitting them on-line, if at all possible, is the best option - the claim might get auto-processed and season ticket holders / Oyster / Key Go users do need to re-provide proof of purchase and you can also submit up to 3 claims at once (and create an online account).

**I would be interested to hear of current payment times for online and postal claims.**

I have also received clarification of how to claim when boarding is impossible due to overcrowding, alternate routes were taken, you did not travel because of disruption etc.

- Set the 'Reason for Claim' to 'Other' (on the paper version, I suggest you cross out the pre-printed options and write in 'Other').
- Choose the total delay you incurred, or if you did not travel because of extensive service failure set the Length of Delay to '2 hours or more' (which triggers a 100% refund) [You will need to itemise two journeys - outbound and return].
- Enter an explanation in the 'supply further information' box (which only appears after 'other' has been chosen).

Reason for claim

\* Other

Please supply further information (max 250 characters)

\* Eg "Given a 2 train per hour service due to the problems at Luton, I chose not to travel on this day"

Length of delay

\* 2 hours or more

Please select...

30-59 minutes

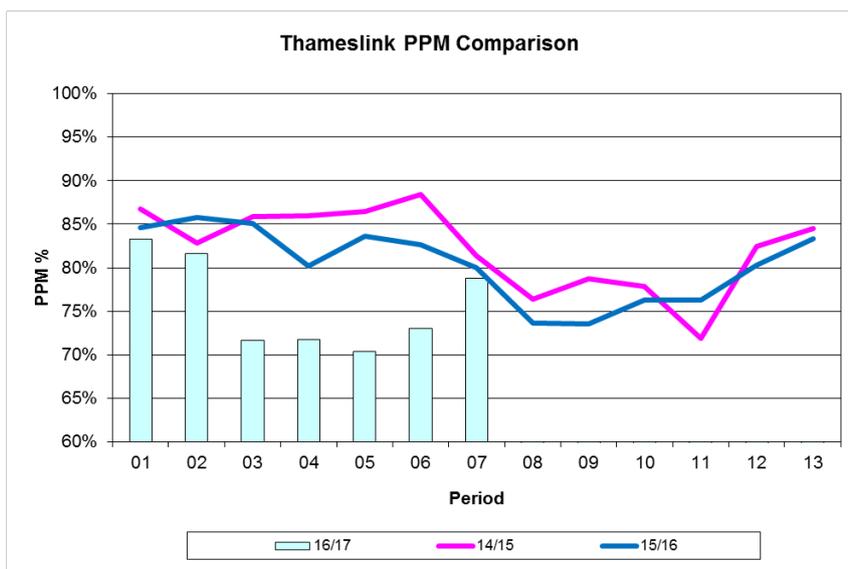
1 hour to 1 hour 59 minutes

2 hours or more

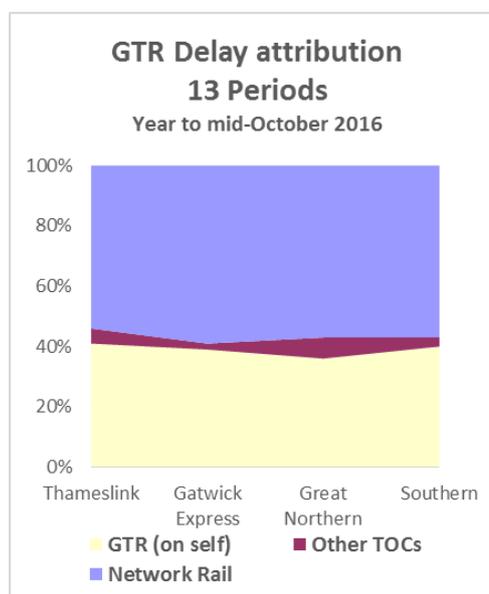
Repeat for outbound and return journeys

## Recent performance

We did see an improvement in performance up to mid-October (end of railway reporting period 7); In terms of overall GTR performance, the Thameslink PPM (Public Performance Measure) at 78.8% is the best of a very sad bunch - the other 3 GTR brands are Gatwick Express 74.8%, Great Northern 75.6%,

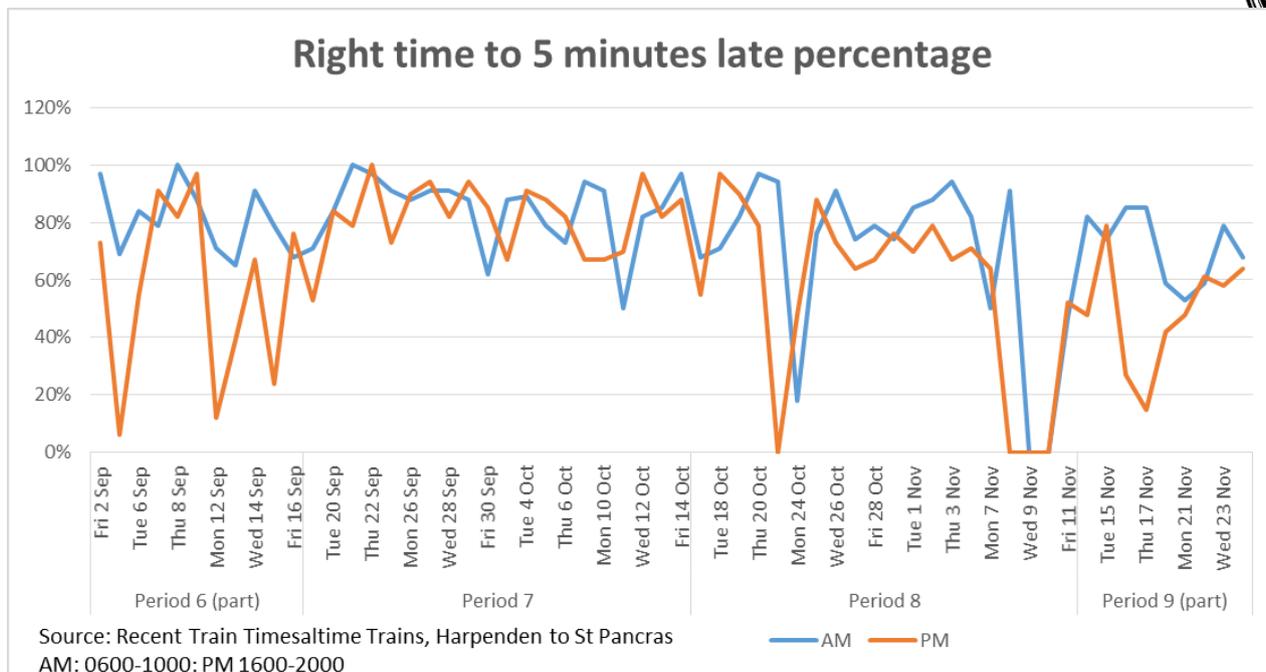


Southern 74%. Delay attribution also remains broadly unchanged, with the majority of delay being attributed to Network Rail. It is of note that the Thameslink percentage of errors it caused itself is the highest (albeit only by 1%); I suspect this a reflection of the problems suffered during the Class 700 introduction over the Summer.



For Period 8, there has been a notable reduction in performance, with Thameslink operating at a PPM of 63.3% - According to the Evening Standard this is the lowest for at least six years; we should note that, with the possible exception of last Thursday's problems, the immediate cause has been largely outside GTR's immediate responsibility - either Network Rail faults or external parties.

Whilst I would hope that the current period will show a better performance than Period 8, based on performance to date I cannot see it being an improvement on Period 7:



### Driver numbers

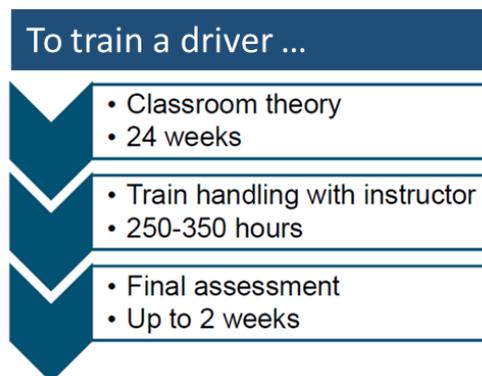
Cancellations due to driver shortages remain an issue; in particular there seem to be very regular cut backs applied to the overnight service.

If you (or someone you know) is an overnight service user, I would appreciate hearing about ‘bad’ consequences following a cancelled train.

The situation was as follows on 15 October:

- Since January 2015: 70 new drivers have qualified
- Trainees currently in training: 106
- Current driver numbers: 348 out of 371

I hear that one of the challenges faced by Thameslink at present is that they don’t have enough driver trainers and that existing drivers are loath to take up the training role. A second challenge is the need to continue to train drivers to drive Class 700s.



We have been told that the current expectation is that drivers will be at establishment around Summer 2017.

We have also been tipped off that there will be risks to the service this Christmas / New Year break. I suspect this will be most noticeable on New Year’s Day (it is a Sunday this year); I can also see problems on Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 18<sup>th</sup>.

### Network Rail performance – ORR assessment

The Office of Rail & Road (ORR) has described Network Rail performance as ‘Poor’ (nationally) and gone on to identify that NR performance on GTR routes is particularly bad.

- Performance across the country has been mixed but has generally been poor with delays attributed to Network Rail worse than target in England, Wales and Scotland. An important



area of focus for Network Rail is the time taken to recover from disruption and the company has identified this as a key improvement area.

- In the South East Route, GTR customers in particular have experienced train performance well below acceptable levels. This is partly as a result of traincrew and fleet issues which are outside Network Rail's direct control. However a significant proportion of delay is categorised as 'uninvestigated' and 'unexplained' which hinders Network Rail's ability to understand and address the underlying causes.
- Across the network asset performance has generally improved but, contrary to expectations, punctuality and reliability have declined. This may be the result of shortcomings in the way services are recovered after incidents. Delays per Incident (DPI) can be a useful metric here. DPI has been increasing in recent years and Network Rail has described reducing it as a "must win".

On the positive side they do say "Overall performance in health and safety across the rail network is good", however, going on to say "though there are clear areas for improvement".

More at [orr.gov.uk/news-and-media/press-releases/2016/orrs-half-year-assessment-of-network-rail](http://orr.gov.uk/news-and-media/press-releases/2016/orrs-half-year-assessment-of-network-rail).

An improvement in Network Rail performance is essential if we are to have a reliable railway to travel on and I do believe that they want to improve; however a combination of inertia, the size of the organisation and cost pressures will make this difficult and slow to achieve.

## Ticketing – Smartcards & Carnets

Here is the latest we have from GTR on the rollout of Smartcard technology and Carnets:

### Smart Cards

- Expecting to extend KeyGo (Key 'Pay as You Go') to Thameslink Great Northern and to the national stations we serve in London in the next couple of months. *Editor note: this was confirmed last month, so implies now relatively imminent.*
- Our overall plan is to eventually have everyone move to the Key with either a pre-purchased season and/or KeyGo. However, that will of course involve a series of developments over the next few years. *Editor note: Whilst Smartcard technology is currently the way to go, APTU will be objecting to this precise goal – for regular users, contactless bank cards, phones etc should be alternative tokens, and for very occasional users, paper tickets still need to be valid.*
- Our general expectation is to incrementally enhance the system with steady releases rather than trying to do too much at once. *Editor note: We strongly support this.*

### Carnet Ticketing

- We continue to discuss this issue with DfT to try to proceed to launch carnet at least in trial form. *Editor note: We strongly support this.*
- There is a fundamental issue around ensuring that any changes do not lose revenue for DfT given the expectation that we must maintain value for taxpayers. *Editor note: However it is also unfair that some tax payers have the opportunity to buy them and others do not. At least initially, it seems sensible to lobby for a like for like replacement/extension on KeyGo, with the same 10% discount – possibly delivered by alternative means – eg rather than 10% in advance it becomes every 10<sup>th</sup> journey free.*



## Class 700s

Class 700 performance is much improved from the dark days over the summer - the latest Stakeholder meeting told us that MTIN (Miles Per Technical Incident [costing more than 5 minutes]) had improved by a factor of 40 (that's 40 times better, not 40% better). We know that there are still noticeable issues with the Passenger Information System, but these are not stopping the train running. It is also fair to allocate some of the improvement to the drivers - they now understand the trains better so know how to avoid issues - and fix them quicker.

I will follow up regarding progress (or lack of it) on delivery of Wifi and seatback tables at the Thameslink Stakeholder Reference Group next month, and will also see if progress has been made on a commitment for seating bay tables and power sockets.

Class 700s have started appearing on Sevenoaks services from today.

Finally, a reminder that the rear of the train with First Class seats (and tables and power sockets) is always de-classified as is the front section on any train not marked as having First Class - effectively this is every Thameslink service to/from Kent and to/from the Wimbledon loop - unless they run fast between St Pancras and St Albans (but do check the timetable for certainty).

## London Thameslink tickets – Underground inter-availability

A reminder that if you have bought a ticket to 'London Thameslink' it is always valid on the London Underground between Kentish Town/West Hampstead and London Bridge/Elephant & Castle - and Thameslink intermediate stations. As part of this long standing deal, underground only tickets are also valid on Thameslink trains. There is one exception to this, which does not normally apply to tickets issued at Thameslink stations - that is if your ticket is labelled "FCC only", "TL only", "Ldn Not Und" or "Not Underground".

This feature can be used to get to London Bridge without an underground add-on to your ticket and can also be useful if your train is terminated early.

More at [railforums.co.uk/showpost.php?p=1315636](http://railforums.co.uk/showpost.php?p=1315636) - this is an unofficial (but in my view reliable) site, which also explains other inter-available options. I have not been able to find a comprehensive, up to set of web pages on any official website, but the following are all relevant:

- (not up to date): From ATOC: [nfm16.nationalrail.s3-website-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/tm\\_london/885.html](http://nfm16.nationalrail.s3-website-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/tm_london/885.html)
- (current, but wrong - omits valid routes, includes Moorgate for Thameslink): [nationalrail.co.uk/times\\_fares/pr50e2210a0400020111e6a4beefae08.aspx](http://nationalrail.co.uk/times_fares/pr50e2210a0400020111e6a4beefae08.aspx)
- (current, but not explicit about all possibilities [in this case, this is fair enough, it is focusing on London Bridge]): [thameslinkrailway.com/download/6879.6/january-travel-advice/](http://thameslinkrailway.com/download/6879.6/january-travel-advice/) (PDF, page 5).

I have written to National Rail Enquiries regarding these problems.



## Industrial relations

This rumbles on as regards Southern Guards. Of greater impact to travellers on Southern will be today's announcement by ASLEF that drivers are also to strike over Driver Only Operation. As yet, dates for this are unknown.

As regards strikes by Guards / On Board Supervisors (OBSs), of note is that strikes have been announced for the run up to Christmas (22 - 24 December) and over the New Year (31 December - 2 January) - this may be relevant if you, or relatives / friends are on the move for festive visits. GTR also commented:

The impact of future RMT strikes will reduce as we complete the process of giving drivers full operational control of trains. OBSs [On Board Supervisors] can work more flexibly, we are now recruiting more of them and if one is not available at short notice, we can run a train without one being available.

However, we are also hearing of teething problems on the Southern regarding OBSs - eg Southern trains not stopping at stations between East Croydon and Gatwick because the stations have not been safety cleared (even though Thameslink have approval using the same trains).

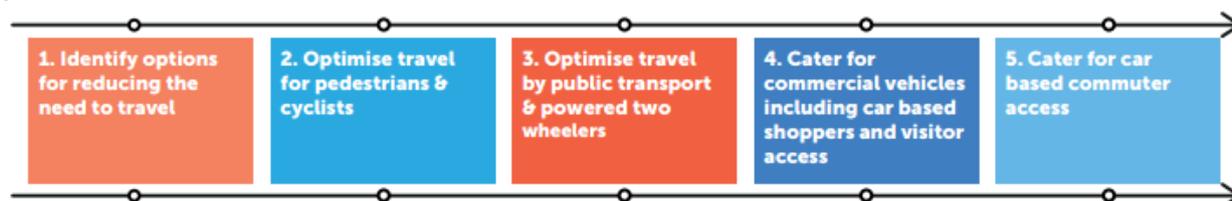
## The Underground

There is also expected strike action on the underground - if it goes ahead, it will affect the Hammersmith & City and Piccadilly lines from early evening on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> December and all day on Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> December.

## Hertfordshire Transport Vision 2050

If you live in, work in, or regularly visit Hertfordshire, you wish to read and comment on this (comments are due by 14 December).

Of greatest note is that it recommends that public transport is rated as more preferable than cars:



The document identifies public transport's greatest need as being improvement in East West travel, which leaves the choice as bus improvements and light / heavy rail improvements; bus is currently highlighted in view of much lower initial costs. I am lead to understand that parts of the document that imply it is a 'done deal' that the Watford to St Albans Abbey line will be converted to a busway should not be read that way - if the concept of improved East West travel by public transport is approved then more work will identify the best solutions. In the short/medium term, I am told that the Council remains committed to improvements in the National Rail service, particularly a passing loop.

The document can be read here: [hertfordshire.gov.uk/your-council/consult/transportconsult/TV2050/](http://hertfordshire.gov.uk/your-council/consult/transportconsult/TV2050/)



APTU will respond. Our response is likely to:

- Support the priorities outlined above.
- Note that it is important that travel to the rail station by car is considered within '3', rather than '5', probably by suggesting that the same priorities be applied for home to station travel (eg cycling is preferred to car use).
- Ask that cycling initiatives targeted at larger urban areas are also applied to every Railway station.
- Specifically note that the lack of late evening buses can be issue for rail commuters.

If you have any comments or thoughts, these would be appreciated.

### **Transforming Stations (moving staff out of the ticket office)**

This is the latest update:

On 14 November we began to test the station host concept. The first three stations are: Chichester, Enfield Chase and Sandy, as agreed with union representatives and passenger bodies.

These trials will give us the opportunity to thoroughly test all aspects of our proposals, including ticket office layout, technology supporting the change and what training our station colleagues need. The remaining stations (Battersea Park, Balham, **City Thameslink**, **Cricklewood**, Queens Road Peckham) will be live by the start of December and will be trialled for six months. Initial feedback on the training from colleagues who have volunteered for the trial has been very positive. A union representative has also agreed to take part in the secondment as well, this provide a useful insight into the role.

Passengers using these stations will see our seconded station hosts on the concourse area, they will be able to assist passengers using the ticket machines, journey advice and sell tickets from a handheld device. There have been no reductions in staffing levels at stations trialling the concepts and station users will be kept informed of updates via local communications, including station posters.

### **Class 319 heating**

A member asked about time to repair the heating on Class 319s (as the perennial problem of cold Class 319s is re-occurring). This was the response:

Following your further email today, I asked our Depot Manager how long it typically takes to fix a fault with the heating on a Class 319. He replied that it would depend on the nature of the fault. If it was just a spurious blown fuse then within a few days or however long it takes for the unit to return to the depot. If it became a more in depth fault finding exercise i.e. an earthed heater cable under the train flooring they would attempt to get a percentage of the heating working by disconnecting the defective wiring. The unit would then return to service until such time as they could manage the workload of pulling up the train floor, which would be dependent on their resources and on unit availability."

Unfortunately it is rarely a quick fix but they do aim to restore heating as quickly as possible.

### **Transport Select Committee "Improving the rail passenger experience"**

I mentioned this report (where I gave oral evidence) in our last newsletter. Key demands it makes include:



- The Department for Transport (DfT) should consider how [GTR] passengers can be appropriately compensated, as a matter of urgency.
- The DfT must “get a grip” on the monitoring and enforcement of Govia Thameslink Railway’s (GTR) franchise agreement to deliver services on the TSGN network.
- It must expedite its assessments of GTR’s force majeure claims, and be prepared to restructure or terminate the agreement should GTR be shown to be in default.
- In the interests of transparency and scrutiny, the DfT must ensure that data on GTR’s performance against its contractual obligations are made publicly available.
- Headline measures of passenger satisfaction and train operating company (TOC) performance do not accurately reflect the real experience of many passengers, particularly commuters on overcrowded parts of the network.
- The DfT and the Office of Rail and Road must use their respective franchising and regulatory powers more rigorously, and work together to resolve ticketing issues.
- The sector urgently needs a clear plan for investment in Wi-Fi technology on the railway.

The report is available at <http://bit.ly/1T19Kqd> (parliament.uk).

With a fair wind, we may, in particular, see more information released, which will help us when we want to challenge the Rail Industry.

### **London Luton Airport and East Midlands Trains stopping pattern**

At present Luton Airport Parkway has a service of 1 East Midlands Train per hour, and they have recently released a report to support their case for 4 East Midlands Train per hour as part of the imminent rebrand specification. They identify this could be achieved by stopping the planned sixth train per hour (from Corby) at Luton and Luton Airport Parkway, shifting the existing Luton (town) stop in the current Corby service to Luton Airport Parkway and adding a stop to the faster Nottingham service.

We will be supportive of this, as anything that increases capacity in our part of the world is a ‘good’ thing’, however, the long distance operators will see two downsides to offset the increased revenue from Airport travellers - seats occupied by Airport travellers cannot be sold to long distance travellers (where the revenue per person is potentially higher) and revenue lost through extended journey times.

There is a potential downside for local travellers - please do let me know if this will significantly impact you: The airport service may be marketed as a premium brand with higher fares (like Gatwick and Heathrow Expresses). It is not clear how this would impact Luton town station fares (for the hourly service that will call there); this may lead to a de-facto service reduction as only Thameslink services can be used at the lowest fares.

### **Midland Mainline Electrification**

Separately, we believe it is likely that electrification north of Kettering & Corby will be deferred and use of the current Stansted Express stock on the Corby services is rumoured (Greater Anglia have a 100% new stock commitment); there is also talk of dual powered trains for long distance services. The impact of this is probably very limited, but there could be minor timetable implications (potentially slower



acceleration and Corby services probably limited to 110 miles per hour). Work to allow 125 mph Electric train running south of Bedford might be deferred (although if dual powered trains are purchased, it will need to be delivered), which might lead to lower resilience in the overhead for longer.

Regards

*Neil*

Neil Middleton  
28 November 2016