

Terms of Reference

Railway Industry Performance Improvement in the North of England

Background

The period since the May 2018 timetable change has been a period of significant service instability, with multiple cancellations and delays leading to a significant loss in confidence in the railway industry as a whole.

Richard George has been asked by the Department for Transport to assist with Railway industry performance improvement in the region covered by Transport for the North.

He is an independent railway expert and not employed by, nor aligned to, any of the train operating companies or their owning groups, nor to Network Rail, nor to the DfT or TfN.

Objective

In the short/medium term, the objective is to re-establish a stable operational railway service across the region; this in itself will help re-build public, political and industry confidence.

In the medium/longer term the objective is to establish a platform for sound, sustainable railway operations whilst continuing to improve the infrastructure, grow the capacity, grow the capability and improve service levels in the region to the level that is planned and desired.

Issues

It is clear that the root causes of problems this year have been failure of infrastructure project delivery, failure of the train plan, failure of contingency plans, problems in coping with weather conditions and all exacerbated by on-going industrial relations problems.

There are many different organisations involved and it is clear that there have been both individual and collective failures. Importantly, it is not always clear where the best route lies to fixing the problems.

Every organisation has worked with the best interests of the railway and its customers at heart, but they also have overlapping, competing and occasionally conflicting priorities.

Approach

It is not intended to conduct a detailed investigation into what went wrong and why, the approach is to concentrate on **operational** improvement in the short/medium term learning from the recent problems, rather than spending management time describing them.

Richard's role will be to act on behalf of the customers of the railway with their interests at heart, taking a pan industry view of the railway industry itself, to act as a focus wherever necessary to assist the organisations responsible for delivery of any operational improvements to do so. Also where necessary, to assist the specifying organisations with meeting their aspirations for operational stability and improvement.

He will therefore have a facilitation role in helping the industry reach the right decisions in the interests of improving passenger services on a pan-industry basis, rather than the narrow focus of any one entity or industry party.

The decision making must continue to lie with the relevant delivery organisations and specifying authorities. It is not in this remit to build a new organisation, nor is it to diminish or reduce the responsibility and authority of the existing organisations. Where necessary matters will be referred to DfT and Rail North.

Where necessary groups/meetings will be established but the creation of another level of bureaucracy is not the intention.

Support

Richard will be assisted by a small team of experts who will:

1. Take on findings and recommendations as appropriate that arise from the work being undertaken by the Rail North Partnership and will focus on possible future improvements.
2. Review the detailed **operational** performance improvement options with the delivery organisations and recommend change as required.

3. Assist or facilitate the planning and implementation as required.
4. Provide independent analysis and reports where required to assist in decision making.

Reporting

The Department for Transport have contracted Richard and the team on a consultancy basis via the Section 30 arrangements and the contract held by Arup/EY/SNC-Lavalin for support in this area.

Richard is contracted by the DfT but will work very closely with and respond to Transport for the North.

It is anticipated that regular meetings will be established with both TfN and DfT and provide progress updates on industry plans to TfN's Rail North Committee.

Timescales

It is anticipated that this is a temporary role to assist the industry over and through a difficult period and that therefore the role that Richard will perform will be for approximately a 6 month period.

Beyond that period then the role will either cease to need to exist or will need to be institutionalised into revised governance arrangements.

Assessment of the effectiveness of the role and recommendations for future performance improvement and future governance arrangements at the end of the period will be made by the team at the relevant time.

Acceptance or otherwise of those recommendations will be for DfT, TfN and Network Rail.