Written evidence submitted by Mr Oliver Robertson (RTC0014)

I am a South Cambridgeshire resident who commutes daily from the south Cambridge village of Foxton to London Kings Cross.

Since 20 May I have been keeping a meticulous record of the delays I have encountered on my daily commute. I would like to share these with you as a snapshot of the disruption the GTR train chaos has caused to commuters living in the villages of Foxton, Shepreth and Meldreth.

In the 34 working days between 21 May to 6 July I have submitted ‘delay repays’ totalling a minimum of 41.25 hours. I say minimum because I’ve been extremely generous by assuming the minimum number of minutes for every banding of delay repay I’ve submitted. The true picture is probably substantially more.

This means I’ve now lost the equivalent of a whole working week in train delays in just seven weeks! Most of these hours have been spent on station platforms, rail replacement buses and trying to find someone kind enough to drive me to - or pick me up from - Royston. My employer, although sympathetic to my situation, is rightly frustrated at my frequent 10am appearances and 4.30pm mad dashes out of the office yelling something about every train being cancelled. My life has become a continual diary juggling-act trying to work out how I will get to London for work commitments and how I will get home.

Just think how many working weeks have now been lost in total for everyone who is suffering at the hands of this appalling company.

And the above is just a snippet of my life as a commuter. Over this same period there has also been significant disruption to weekend trips. On two separate weekends London trips were abandoned altogether after hours and hours of “will the trains run or won’t they” discussions with friends and family.

As if all the above wasn’t bad enough, I have now driven a total of 196 miles back and forth between Foxton and Royston to catch trains which sometimes get me to work on time for commitments I can’t miss. Oh, and shelled out over £40 in Royston station car park fees. Despite writing to GTR twice to reclaim these expenses, I’m still yet to receive any commitment to compensating me.

I pay £4,620 a year for a service which is so central to my life, yet so unreliable and unfit for purpose.

I am tired of this disruption and stress.

For the first time in many years of commuting I have started to seriously question whether it’s worth it any more. Working locally may not provide me with the income I receive for working in London but at least I would experience a significant reduction in stress and be able to spend more time living a life instead of standing on a train station platform staring at a departure board which says ‘CANCELLED’ or ‘DELAYED’.

In my profession, if let my clients down I lose work. If I was to let clients down continually I would most probably be out of a job completely. Why isn’t this the case in the rail industry? Why does this country have such a low expectation of its transport network?

It’s not good enough and it’s ruining lives.

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