Questions

1. a) The number of trains which have been cancelled and b) how much the train cancellations have cost?

   a) In order to create a more stable and predictable service for our passengers, GTR have cancelled 350 planned trains per day, out of the 3,600 daily services GTR operates.

   b) Under the terms of our contract with the Department for Transport, GTR is required to keep commercially sensitive financial figures confidential.

2. a) What steps you are taking to put things right / When will these steps take effect and b) Why timetables are not being adequately delivered?

   a) GTR moved quickly once the scale and scope of the problems became apparent over the weekend of 20 May in discussion with the Department for Transport.

   In the first week the service was highly unstable and effectively had to be re-planned each day. There was no timetable at all for the first weekend 26th/27th May as there was no workable timetable available from Network Rail. Special short-term measures were put in place that worked reasonably well for passengers. This basic service is the one that has been in place at weekends ever since and is working now well for passengers.

   On 28th of May the Chief Operating Officer and emergency team established a three-phase plan for recovery:

   • Phase 1 - coping phase to run for another week (up to 3 June).
   • Phase 2 - stabilisation interim timetable to deliver a planned reduced service to build greater stability than in phase 1 and to remove the “cancellations lists” from information screens specifically requested by the Department for Transport.
   • Phase 3 - develop an amended and fully worked through timetable to restore stable, consistent and reliable service. To be introduced from 15 July.

   This was notified to the Department for Transport.

GTR’s top priority is to deliver a more dependable service for our passengers. In the immediate aftermath of the timetable change, the only way to do this was to regularise services being cancelled and to amend online journey planners accordingly.
We have been making progress at delivering these plans in advance and as of Monday 25 June, passengers have been able to plan weekday journeys in advance for three week periods.

Our next step will be the introduction of an interim timetable from Sunday 15th July. This will give passengers a more dependable service and will be based on the May timetable but with fewer services primarily in the off peak periods. We will then introduce further services to complete the intended May timetable, but this will only be done once we are certain it can deliver the passenger benefits of extra capacity, reliability and journey options that it needs to.

b) This is a complex problem and the result of industry wide shortcomings. The introduction of the new timetable required input, decisions and actions from a wide range of bodies including ourselves, Network Rail and the Department for Transport. The times of every single one of our 3,200 daily services had to change, 400 new services per day needed to be created, and new routes had to be made connecting destinations that have never been linked together by rail before.

All of these new journeys needed to be individually approved by Network Rail to ensure the national rail network runs safely and smoothly. Unfortunately, as a result of the sheer number of changes required and the late running of some engineering improvements, the process took longer than anticipated, approvals for service changes were delayed and some timetable requests were changed.

This meant that GTR had much less time to prepare for the new timetable that required trains and drivers to run on different routes. In the end, GTR were left with three weeks to do a minimum of three months’ work. The differences between the timetables submitted and those approved created an additional requirement for training that had not been anticipated. This meant that the necessary specialist training was not able to be completed in time for some drivers to learn new routes and for GTR to address all the logistical challenges.

The challenge in the phase 2 timetable period was that the stabilising action was not as effective as we would have expected. What we could not account for was that, in effectively pulling apart the timetable, significant gaps were created in the service plan due to trains being removed or cancelled where drivers needed to move onto their next trains and vice versa. This has been a significant contributor to around 100 additional cancellations per day arising from on-the-day activities and incidents. Although the service has become more stable it is still liable to short notice cancellations or reinstatement of service with a concomitant issue of passengers receiving insufficient notice of timetable changes.

3. Why communication with customers is so poor? Websites, staff at stations, social media

GTR is communicating as frequently and effectively as possible with our customers. Our station staff have worked tremendously hard throughout this period to help passengers plan their journeys and we pay great tribute to them for their hard work in difficult circumstances. We are also highly active on social media responding to passenger concerns and we have improved journey planners so that passengers now have a much clearer picture of which trains will be running and when, with the ability to view timetables three weeks in advance.

Over the coming days and weeks, we will be stepping up our efforts to communicate key issues to passengers, focusing on the amended timetable, the peak time declassification of first class and the options around compensation.
To communicate this information, we are using a range of channels:

- Our website is now equipped with the latest Q&A
- PDFs of the interim timetable are available online
- Leaflets are being distributed at all hotspot stations each weekday (9\textsuperscript{th} - 13\textsuperscript{th})
- Regular announcements are happening at stations each day (9\textsuperscript{th} - 13\textsuperscript{th})
- Numerous direct emails to CRM database (ongoing)
- Social media content signposting PDF timetables and compensation (ongoing)
- Pinned tweets with key information (ongoing)

We regret that due to the high volume of queries from customers at present, it will sometimes take longer than usual for us to process and respond to customer enquiries. However, GTR continue to take customer communication very seriously and we endeavour to respond to all customer inquiries in a timely manner.

4. a) When will the compensation be paid? b) And how will this be done and communicated?

a) Compensation payments are ongoing as part of our Delay Repay compensation service. Approximately 80\% of passenger compensation claims are being paid in 2 to 3 days.

b) We continue to encourage customers to claim the compensation they are entitled to. In addition to our normal promotion of Delay Repay, we have emailed season ticket holders reminding them of their compensation rights, and posters are up at all of our stations encouraging customers to claim compensation. Customers can claim compensation in the usual way by visiting the ‘Delay Repay’ page on the websites of Southern Rail, Thameslink, Great Northern, and Gatwick Express respectively.

Season Ticket holders may be entitled to claim enhanced compensation for trains delayed by 30 minutes or longer for 12 days or more in a reporting period.

We have also subsequently announced a special compensation scheme in agreement with the Department for Transport for Thameslink and Great Northern passengers most severely affected by disruption following May’s timetable change. Compensation will be paid to qualifying season ticket holders according to the level of disruption on Thameslink and Great Northern services.

Refunds will be the equivalent to the cost of one week or four weeks’ rail travel depending on the disruption to services for passengers and subject to qualifying criteria. The scheme will be funded by the rail industry, including GTR, in recognition of the disruption caused by the failure of the new May timetable.

GTR is working with the Department for Transport to make available full details of the scheme shortly. This will include a full list of qualifying stations, eligibility details and claims advice.

5. How can people feel confident that December’s timetable change will work?

The December timetable is currently under active and urgent review as the industry works together to mitigate any potential further disruption for passengers. A full announcement on the implementation of this timetable has been made by the Rail Delivery Group.
6. **IRB & IAP minutes**

These we believe have been provided to the Committee from the IRB Chairman and the Department for Transport.

*July 2018*