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Introduction

1. Demand for rail services has more than doubled since 1994, to over 1.7bn\(^1\) journeys. While this is a sign of its success, it has also brought challenges and some of our busiest routes are operating at capacity, particularly during peak times. To facilitate the extra services needed to satisfy the huge growth in demand, the railway is undergoing its biggest modernisation since the Victorian era. As part of this, the Department has invested in an ambitious programme of infrastructure enhancements including schemes that will transform travel within the North of England and improve North-South travel to and through London.

2. In supporting this major investment, the new timetable, introduced by Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR) on Sunday 20 May, was the most ambitious in recent railway history, and planned to deliver around 70% of the benefits of the Thameslink Programme with additional capacity for tens of thousands more peak-time commuters. The final Thameslink timetable will see services every 2-3 minutes between Blackfriars and St Pancras International at the busiest times.

3. Equally, the Great North Rail Programme is another major investment in infrastructure, rolling stock and extra services designed to transform the railway in the North of England. Significant investment is being made through the Northern franchise to improve rail services in the North over the next four years. This will include the introduction of brand new trains, including more than 500 new carriages, room for 40,000 extra passengers and more than 2,800 extra services a week. By 2020 all the trains will be brand new or completely refurbished as new, and all the Pacer trains will be gone.

4. Timetabling is a highly complex industry-led process that requires precise coordination between Network Rail (NR) and all operators across the network. The Department for Transport (DfT) does not make timetabling decisions, those are for industry. However, on Thameslink, aware of the challenge posed by the introduction of new high frequency Thameslink services operating across a wide geographic area, the Department set up a cross industry board and independent assurance processes to advise on readiness for the timetable changes. At no time did these processes flag the problems or risks of the scale experienced. The rail industry has collectively failed to deliver for the passengers it serves. On Northern and TransPennine Express

(TPE) routes, NR was unable to deliver infrastructure upgrades critical to the planned timetable and, by the time those delays became unrecoverable, there was limited time to adjust the timetable to fit the infrastructure that would be available. On GTR routes, the infrastructure was delivered but the scale of timetable change required was such that NR was not able to agree it in the normal timescales which delayed major down-stream planning activities for GTR.

Passengers on Northern, TPE and the Thameslink and Great Northern parts of GTR have faced unsatisfactory levels of service. When things went wrong the Department took immediate action to ensure that the industry took steps to restore reliability and stability for passengers. The Department worked with franchisees to put in place special compensation schemes to provide redress to passengers and interim timetables to increase stability.

5. The Department is challenging industry to ensure that the problems do not occur again. We have commissioned a review, led by the Office of Rail and Road (ORR) and Stephen Glaister into what went wrong with the implementation of the timetable in May. Separately, the Department is also undertaking its own review into GTR on whether any contractual obligations were broken. It is vitally important to ensure lessons are learnt from the serious issues with the introduction of the May 2018 timetable. We have already taken positive steps in asking industry to assess what the risks and options are for the introduction of the December 2018 timetable. As a result, we have accepted industry’s recommendations for a scaling back of the planned level of changes for this December.

6. We recognise though that there is a balance to be struck between stability and delivering improvements. Timetable changes are one part of delivering benefits to passengers alongside, for example, delivery of new rolling stock with extra carriages and greater capacity. As such it is vital that the Rail industry has the capability and capacity to deliver significant levels of timetable changes, without passenger disruption. We are looking to the Glaister review to consider what longer term changes may be required to enable this to happen.
The Timetable Process

With a few exceptions (e.g. HS1), NR owns Britain’s rail infrastructure. NR is also responsible for balancing the requirements of all train operators to ensure that overall, the rail system delivers the services that passengers and freight companies need. This means that NR owns and is responsible for delivering the national timetable.

To ensure that all operators are treated fairly, there is a defined process by which access rights and timetables are applied for; consulted on; and agreed. This process is defined in the Network Code and is regulated by the ORR.

Developing and then operating the timetable is a complicated task. It is helped by the use of dedicated planning tools but still requires a very high level of manual intervention from highly skilled specialists. An illustration of the timetable change process can be found in Annex A.

To be able to operate trains, the operating companies\(^2\) need to:

1) Secure rights to use the infrastructure;
2) Agree the timetable that those trains will operate to;
3) Allocate appropriate trains to each service (the ‘Train Diagram’); and
4) Allocate appropriate drivers and other train crew to the services (the ‘Crew Diagram’).

These activities need to be completed in this sequence, however in practice activities are undertaken in parallel but not finalised until after completion of the previous activity. This helps to deliver timetable changes on time but does make the process vulnerable to late-notice changes.

Securing access to the network

The Sale of Access Rights (SoAR) process is managed by NR via a governance panel comprising appropriate individuals from NR. The SoAR Panel provides network-wide governance of the process to negotiate and agree the sale of access rights for track, stations and depots for all train operators. The panel’s principal role is to ensure that NR applies a consistent approach across the network to: treat all applicants fairly; make best overall use of capacity at an acceptable level of performance; and to make its decisions transparent.

\(^2\) References to Train Operator, Operator or TOC, refer to all companies that wish to operate trains on the national rail network, including franchised train operating companies, freight companies and any other open access (non-franchised) operator
When assessing access applications, the panel must consider a range of issues such as the impact on performance of the network; capacity of the network; and any regulatory considerations.

Whilst the process is managed by NR’s SoAR panel, it is the ORR that makes the final decision on whether to grant access rights to an operator. Evidence of support from the SoAR panel is an important consideration but operators are also free to dispute NR’s decision and seek a decision directly from ORR.

Timetable changes

To provide stability, operators are normally only permitted to propose major timetable changes twice per year - in May and December. The industry normally expects to deliver larger scale changes in December, aligned to the timetable change date in Europe (due to cross-channel passenger and freight services).

The timetable change process is owned and controlled by NR under a framework set out in Part D of the Network Code. The process is intended to give operators sufficient time to develop a timetable proposal and to consult (and respond to feedback from) other operators. It also allows NR to assess any proposals to make sure they can be delivered on the available infrastructure, work alongside other operators’ services and do not worsen performance of the network.

The process defines key milestones’ dates by the number of weeks prior to the relevant timetable change date.

Operational readiness

To be able to operate a new timetable, operators need to develop detailed plans that set out precisely how trains and train crew (drivers, on-board supervisors, catering staff etc.) will move around the network for the duration of the operating day. For a large operator this can mean individually planning the movements (known as diagrams) of hundreds of trains and over 1,000 drivers, and other train crew.

Planning the trains

The movements of individual trains need to be precisely planned each day to ensure that the right number of trains are available for passenger service whilst, allowing for maintenance, cleaning and repairs.

3 Timetable changes at other times of year are permitted – e.g. timetable changes associated with major blockades (as was seen during the rebuilding of London Bridge).
The movement of trains in passenger service is planned and managed minute-by-minute as timetabled services. The movement of trains to, from and within depots and train care facilities must also be tightly choreographed to ensure that all trains receive the right level of maintenance.

A typical train diagram will include time for a detailed array of activities. This includes, but is not limited to, time for: the train to be switched on and made ready for service; the train to move on to the main line; the actual operation of the timetable (which includes things like crew rest breaks); moving the train to/from fuelling points, washers, toilet emptying, maintenance locations and many other things.

Throughout the diagram, mileage must be accurately tracked to ensure that the train receives the right mileage-based maintenance and remains in a safe condition.

Train Crew Planning

To illustrate the complexity of a daily diagram of work, for each member of train crew (e.g. drivers) operators need to plan to-the-minute timings for the full day. Again, this includes a vast array of planning from the point of the driver signing on at the depot to signing off at the end of the day. In between this are detailed plans down to the timing allowed for the driver to walk to the train or to provide feedback to depot staff.

Each train crew diagram needs to be signed off by the relevant trade union representative before it can be put to use.

Driver training

For safety reasons, it is vital that drivers have a high standard of knowledge about the route on which they are operating and the performance characteristics of the train (or trains) they will operate on that route. Once this level of competence is achieved, it must be maintained. This means drivers need to drive on routes at least once every 3-6 months (dependent on route) to retain their competency. Failure to do so means they need to be taken off active duty and re-trained.

Therefore, when planning these diagrams, operators must also consider the level of knowledge and competence of each driver and make any necessary allowance for additional training or retention of competence levels, leave, sickness and other welfare requirements.

Aligning train and crew diagrams with the timetable

Before a timetable can be operated, the operator must complete the complex process of developing the diagrams and then assigning trains and crew to each service.
The process of optimising diagrams in order to use the minimum numbers of train crew and developing the crew rosters is a complex process. Normally 3 months are allowed for this to be undertaken and therefore, the planning process usually allows for operators to receive their agreed timetable at least 3 months in advance of the change.

Given the complexity, even minor changes to the expected timetable (such as starting a service 5 minutes earlier) can create significant complications with knock-on effects through operations. Most of the time, small changes are manageable, however large or complex changes – particularly involving new infrastructure – are more difficult.

Publication

NR and most train operators prepare internal briefing documentation for frontline staff on major timetable changes, which has to be tailored to the location and/or route to highlight particular issues. This includes appropriate training to customer-facing staff as well as training signallers and control staff.

Operators also have to prepare stakeholder engagement messages, and timetable information both in electronic and printed form. Failure to provide accurate information to the public can be a breach of their operating licence.
The Department’s role in Timetabling

The Department has no direct role in the timetable process. Timetabling is the responsibility of the System Operator in NR, working with Train Operating Companies (TOCs) through a regulatory process governed by the ORR.

NR is responsible for finalising the national rail timetable and for approving timetable proposals from operators. NR must give fair consideration to all operators including freight and open access. The Department has no role in specifying freight or open access services.

The Department specifies the level of train service that each franchised operator should deliver and requires that TOCs work with NR to secure the timetable to deliver those services. Where TOCs are unable to secure the necessary timetable from NR, the Department will work with the TOCs to make appropriate adjustments to the franchise agreement. In addition to this where TOCs are not able to deliver their contracted timetables for reasons outside of their control, e.g. because the necessary infrastructure is not available, this will trigger changes to the premium/subsidy payments defined in their franchise agreements.

The Transport Secretary worked with the rail industry to ensure a more gradual approach was taken to phasing in the Thameslink timetable changes given the significant challenges posed by the introduction of this high frequency timetable. This was reviewed and endorsed by the Thameslink Industry Readiness Board that oversaw the implementation of the timetable changes on GTR. The independent National Audit Office have previously said that this implementation of the Thameslink timetable was sensible.
What went wrong

The challenges for Northern and GTR were different in origin but the net result was the same. The time for each operator to develop plans for the introduction of complex changes that significantly impacted on their businesses was constrained.

In the case of GTR, the sheer number of changes meant that the timetable process took much longer than anticipated.

In the case of Northern, the timetable that they had anticipated operating could not be delivered once it became clear that the infrastructure needed would not be available. As a result, the timetable, and all that this involves, had to be reworked.

Despite the problems faced by Northern and GTR passengers the changes across the rest of the network were delivered successfully – including the major changes on GTR’s Southern network which has seen performance and resilience improve following the May 20 timetable change.

Northern

As specified in the Northern franchise requirement, Northern originally planned to deliver the first major timetable change in December 2017 as a result of the completion of a number of electrification schemes in the North West. This would introduce additional electric vehicles and cascaded diesel vehicles elsewhere on the network. At the time this was delayed until the May 2018 timetable service change date.

Infrastructure assumptions

Northern was resourced to deliver a major recast of its services to deliver the benefits of the electrification of the Bolton and Blackpool corridors in the May 2018 timetable. This plan assumed that the electrification project would be delivered in sufficient time to allow for testing, driver training and other operational readiness activities. While the challenge of this electrification was never in doubt, the Department, Network Rail and the train operating companies continued to believe that the infrastructure programme could deliver on time and every effort was made collectively to make this a reality. This included allowing NR to complete its Christmas 2017 works before a final decision was taken. NR believed that, if these works had gone well, the May 2018 timetable would remain viable and, if they had not, there was still sufficient time to rework the timetable. On the 5 January 2018, it became apparent that the Christmas works had not been sufficient and NR
confirmed that the infrastructure could not be delivered. The industry had been aware that simply rolling forward the Dec 17 timetable would not be an option as this would affect the network as a whole and that, reluctantly, Northern would have to re-work its trains to fit around the other operators.

Northern worked hard to deliver this alternative plan and the training to go with it. Then in March the electrification of the Blackpool line was delayed three weeks, which meant a major extra training requirement for 450 drivers was needed to refresh their route knowledge causing a further re-work.

Drivers

As a result of the delay to electrification schemes in the North West and major infrastructure works at Liverpool Lime Street Station, Northern was required to undertake a significant training plan, especially of drivers.

In addition, ASLEF had refused to extend their Rest Day Working Agreement in mid-February further reducing the flexibility to redeploy and train staff. This meant the training requirement would continue until the end of July. Northern worked hard with ASLEF regarding the situation around Rest Day Working and in early June announced that they had reached an agreement with ASLEF for the immediate introduction of a new Rest Day Working Agreement which assisted the completion of the training requirement for service provision in time for the end of the Liverpool Lime Street Blockade.

Assurances about Readiness for Northern May 2018 Timetable

The Rail North Partnership (RNP) team, which is based in Leeds and manages the Northern and TPE franchises on behalf of both DfT and Transport for the North (TfN) were in regular contact with Northern throughout this time. During this time Northern flagged the scale of the task they were undertaking and the fact that elements of the planned timetable were resulting in a worse outcome for passengers at certain stations (especially in the peak). However, they assured RNP that they were expecting to operate the planned timetable from 20 May.

Northern also gave a written assurance to TfN on 9 May (shared with RNP) providing assurance that they would be able to operate the full timetable from 20 May.

On the 18 May, Northern requested a revised timetable to part cancel a small number of services between Liverpool and Blackpool as a result of the additional training requirements from the delay to the entry into service for the Blackpool electrification scheme.

As David Brown, Managing Director, Arriva Rail North, told the Transport Select Committee on 18 June, it was only at the very end of the planning and rostering
process a couple of days before the planned timetable introduction it became apparent they would be unable to deliver the full timetable.

Whilst circumstances differ across the country, this meant that train companies had less time to prepare for the new timetable which required trains and drivers to run on different routes. The differences between the timetables submitted and those approved created a requirement for training that had not been anticipated. This meant that the necessary specialist training was not able to be completed in time for drivers to learn new routes and for operators to address all the logistical challenges.

**GTR**

The Thameslink, Southern and Great Northern (TSGN) Franchise was established to facilitate the delivery of the new services envisaged as part of the Thameslink Programme. As specified in that franchise GTR originally planned to deliver the new Thameslink timetable of 24 trains per peak hour between St Pancras and Blackfriars in December 2018.

The May 2018 timetable and all the associated changes was an essential building block towards the final timetable in that it envisaged enacting a number of the cross network service changes required to deliver the final Thameslink timetable but that a number of services (4 in total) would not run or would terminate north or south of the Thameslink ‘core’ so that a 20 trains per hour service would operate.

**Phasing**

In line with the emerging views of the industry, the Gibb report published highlighted the challenges in delivering all the changes required to facilitate the new Thameslink timetable in one ‘big-bang’ in May 2018 and as a result proposed a phased implementation. This would lead to a more gradual increase in service levels throughout 2018 and 2019. GTR were tasked with developing a phased plan.

In July 2017, the Secretary of State received advice which recommended a phased introduction of Thameslink services such that 18tph would operate through the core at peak times from May 2018, 20tph from December 2018, 22tph from May 2019 and the final 24tph timetable in December 2019. The Secretary of State agreed in principle to this advice and a final decision to approve the phasing plan was taken in October once GTR had provided the Department with details as to the cost and financial impacts of change.

GTR had already agreed with NR that it would develop the full 24tph timetable and formally submit that as its bid for May 2018 and that the actual May 18 timetable would be confirmed once the 24tph timetable had been approved, with 4tph then removed to achieve 20tph. However, the decision to only operate 18tph through the
Thameslink Core from May 2018 meant a further redesign of the timetable was required. This was not a matter of just removing some services, instead remaining services needed to be re-timed to reduce large service gaps at key stations. The Department had not been made aware of this level of complexity when the phasing decision was made.

GTR worked closely with NR to develop the new timetable. NR confirmed GTR’s timetable on time, in November 2017 but had made c.4,000 potential changes to GTR’s bid, which affected GTR’s operational planning.

It then took GTR and NR until May 2018 to renegotiate and reach agreement on the full timetable for May 2018. A process that took longer than anticipated because whilst some changes NR made were valid, others made the timetable less robust.

However the timetable was substantially complete by the start of March 2018, 3 months later than normal, with only a handful of trains, principally some late night services, overnight services and some Empty Carriage Stock moves not agreed.

GTR felt it had to get the base timetable right before it could fully confirm its plans for May 2018 The delay in achieving this led to inefficient rosters being developed which contributed to many of the issues seen in the weeks after 20 May 2018.

**Track Access Agreement**

Before an operator is allowed to operate trains, it must enter into a track access contract with NR that sets out how many trains can be operated and when they may operate on the various routes. Whilst the agreement is with NR, it is the ORR that, after assessing evidence provided by operators and NR, allocates the access

Normal practice as defined by NR is for operators to apply for access rights prior to the timetable being developed and agreed. In GTR’s case, the timetable changes were so significant that NR required GTR to demonstrate the timetable would work before it could agree to offer rights.

The delays to agreeing the timetable with NR meant that access rights were not granted until 15 May, some 5 days before the timetable was due to operate.

**Implementation Period**

Due to the scale and magnitude of the changes proposed as part of the new Thameslink timetable, a three week ‘implementation period’ was agreed by the Department at the request of GTR.

During this period a number of services (c70 per day in week one) would not run allowing for drivers and trains to be repositioned across the network. The aim of this ‘Implementation Period’ was to give passengers a clearly understood service on a
weekly basis whilst also allow staff and the train fleet to be repositioned. It was envisaged that this period would end after three weeks when the full timetable would be in operation.

**New infrastructure and rolling stock**

As part of the Thameslink Programme significant new infrastructure and a new fleet of trains was introduced to provide the capacity needed to operate the new services.

All the required infrastructure was delivered as planned by NR and Siemens at or before the required dates.

The new infrastructure for Thameslink services via London Bridge opened at the start of January with Canal Tunnels opening for passenger services in February 2018. Significant numbers of drivers needed to be trained to use these new routes.

New Class 700 Thameslink trains were sufficiently available to GTR for the requirements of the May timetable change, which involved an increase in the number of trains in daily service. By way of example, at the time of the timetable change on 20 May, 106 trains were available to GTR and only 98 were needed for weekday passenger service. Further, all trains were delivered by Siemens by the end of June 2018 in line with the contractual requirements.

**Assurances about Readiness for Thameslink May 2018 Timetable**

As recommended by the Gibb report, the Department established a Thameslink Industry Readiness Board to help support and coordinate plans to implement the new Thameslink timetable.

This Board was chaired by Chris Gibb and supported by an Industry Assurance Panel, chaired by Chris Green, which would review plans and overall readiness through detailed interviews and discussions with key parties.

The industry, including the independent assurance panel and readiness board maintained throughout that GTR was capable of making these changes, although there were risks.

As little as three weeks before the timetable was to be implemented, GTR alongside the Chair of the Thameslink Programme Industry Readiness Board assured the Transport Secretary that they believed they were ready to implement the planned changes.

The Department was only made aware of the scale of problems that could arise on 18 May, two days before the new timetable would come into effect.
Compensation

The Department took immediate action to provide compensation to passengers who faced disruption.

The Secretary of State wrote to TOCs on 14 June reminding them to take steps to ensure that clear and accurate information is given to passengers regarding their compensation rights and that all eligible claimants receive the compensation to which they are entitled.

The Department has ensured industry communicated with passengers throughout the disruption on what compensation is available to them. Compensation available under the Delay Repay 15 scheme, under which passengers are eligible for 25% of the cost of their ticket for delays of 15-29 minutes, is considerably more generous than the minimum standard set by the relevant EU Regulation\(^4\) –that is, 25% of the ticket price for delays of one hour or more (60-119 minutes). All affected passengers were able to claim Delay Repay for delays of 30 minutes or more and GTR passengers were additionally able to claim for delays of 15 minutes or more. In addition to this industry announced a special compensation scheme for Northern (11 July) and GTR (13 July) passengers, which was funded by the rail industry. The industry set out details of the eligibility requirements and how season ticket holders can claim.

In July Northern, TransPennine Express and GTR announced that there would be a rail industry funded compensation package for all season ticket holders who had experienced severe disruption. This package offers up to the cost of one month’s travel for each season ticket holder in cash compensation.

Northern

Northern compensation entitlements were paid on the basis of the emergency amended timetable that was introduced on 4 June 2018.

Industry announced on 7 June that there will be a special compensation scheme for both TPE and Northern passengers, agreed by TfN.

TfN agreed that the special compensation should cover weekly, monthly and annual season ticket holders on the worst affected routes who experienced severe disruption before and after the May timetable change. Eligible passengers will receive a cash payment equivalent to up to one month’s travel, which is in addition to the standard existing compensation mechanism for affected journeys.

\(^4\) The EU Regulation on Rail Passengers’ Rights and Obligations (Reg (EC) 1371/2007) sets the minimum compensation for delays at 25% of the ticket price for a delay of 60-119 minutes and 50% of the ticket price for a delay of 120 minutes or more.
Season ticket holders in other parts of the north that have been badly affected since the introduction of the May timetable will be eligible to receive a cash payment equivalent to 1 week’s travel, which is in addition to the standard existing compensation passengers are entitled to.

Details on Northern Passengers’ eligibility for compensation

Season-tickets on the most heavily impacted routes of the North West of the network during the period 1 April to 30 June:

- Passengers with annual or monthly season tickets: A refund of up to one month’s cash refund will be paid from the cost of customers’ season tickets (includes multi-modal tickets).
- Passengers with weekly season tickets: A refund of up to 4 weekly season tickets (includes multi-modal tickets).
- Minimum travel requirement to qualify = 4 weeks’ season tickets
- Those regular travellers who cannot evidence 4 weeks’ travel will be treated as discretionary cases.

Season-ticket holders on other routes that were heavily impacted by the introduction of the May timetable during the period 20 May to 30 June:

- 1 week’s cash refund from the cost of customers’ season tickets (including multi-modal tickets) will be paid.
- Minimum travel requirement = 1 weeks travel

Northern and TransPennine Express will also be opening additional compensation schemes to ensure that people who travelled regularly on the disrupted routes, but without a season ticket, are eligible for compensation. This was announced at the end of July by Transport for the North, which is leading on the design of the scheme. Further details will be announced shortly.

GTR

GTR compensation entitlements will be payable in relation to claims that are submitted either against the May 2018 timetable or in relation to the train service in place on the day the passenger travelled.

Under its contract, GTR would have been entitled to milestone payments totalling to £15million if the new Thameslink timetables had been delivered successfully. It will now not be entitled to these payments and the Department is using the funding that had been set aside for this to contribute toward the cost of the additional compensation scheme. This was the quickest way to secure compensation for our
passengers. This is a real cost to GTR, which is foregoing £15m in milestone payments.

Details on GTR passengers’ eligibility for compensation

Season tickets from the most heavily impacted origin stations, generally where 50% or more of the service is provided by Great Northern or Thameslink:

- Refunds will be the equivalent to up to the cost of four weeks’ or one month’s rail travel for weekly, monthly and annual season ticket holders who hold valid tickets during the period 20 May to 28 July.

- There is no minimum qualifying period, so if you have 1 weeks’ season you get 1 weeks compensation, 2 weeks’ seasons will get 2 weeks’ compensation, 3 week’s seasons will get 3 weeks compensation, and 4 or more week’s season will get 4 weeks’ compensation.

Season tickets on less heavily impacted routes, generally where 25 - 49% of the service is provided by Great Northern or Thameslink:

- Refunds will be the equivalent to one weeks’ rail travel for weekly, monthly and annual season ticket holders who hold valid tickets during the period 20 May to 28 July.

- There is no minimum qualifying period

GTR announced on 28 August that regular travellers will also be eligible for compensation. For the purpose of this scheme, a regular traveller is defined as a passenger who travels three days per week in a seven day period, or 12 or more days travel in a four week period.

Regular travellers from the worst affected stations, generally where 50% or more of the service is provided by Great Northern or Thameslink, will receive compensation based on the cost of tickets purchased for a period of between 1 and 4 weeks. The value of compensation may vary according to ticket type.

Regular travellers from the less heavily impacted routes, generally where 25 - 49% of the service is provided by Great Northern or Thameslink, will receive compensation based on the cost of tickets purchased for a period of 1 week. The value of compensation may vary according to ticket type.

GTR published detailed guidance on how to claim for regular travellers, including the evidence needed for different types of tickets, on its website on 28 August.

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5 The following ticket types are valid under this scheme: Peak carnet, Off peak carnet, Anytime single/return, Off peak single/return, Super off peak single/return, Advance, Daysave, All tickets with a railcard discount, Oyster PAYG/CPAY
Interim Timetable; GTR and Northern

In response to the disruption temporary timetables for Northern were implemented from the 4 June and 15 July for GTR. Both the interim timetables aimed to provide reliability and stability until the full timetables were able to be fully implemented.

GTR informed the Department that the optimal way to bring stability to the timetable and reduce the high level of on-the-day cancellations, was to entirely remove around 320 trains from the timetable ahead of service each day so that they do not show on customer information screens (p-coding). GTR implemented this on 4 June. GTR then announced that an interim timetable would be introduced from 15 July.

Northern

Acting through the RNP, TfN and DfT agreed an action plan was put in place with Northern which included improving driver rostering to get more trains running; increasing driver training on new routes; additional contingency drivers and management presence at key locations in Manchester; and putting extra peak services in the timetable along the Bolton corridor.

From the 4 June Northern implemented an interim timetable which ran until 30 July. It ran fewer services; 168 services a day were removed from the timetable, but still more than it did prior to the May timetable change, to give passengers greater certainty during this period and to increase its capacity to conduct driver training.

The interim timetable provided stability and greater certainty to passengers compared to the period immediately following the 20 May timetable introduction. It certainly did not represent an acceptable level of service for passengers and passengers relying on the Lake Lines experienced a full cancellation of Northern services until the introduction of a shuttle service on 2 July. The steps taken by Northern, however, allowed it to recover the situation, with 74% of Northern train services removed during the interim timetable reintroduced on Monday 30 July, and the remaining 26% to be reintroduced from September.

Passengers experienced significant improvements since 4 June as the timetable stabilised and the restored Rest Day Working agreement allowed drivers to be fully rostered onto the interim timetable.

GTR

GTR passengers have experienced a substantial level of uncertainty and instability. In its 4 June amended timetable, GTR removed around 300 services a day on a pre-planned basis. Despite this, an average of over 150 services were cancelled on top of this each day, largely due to train crew issues. More recently, GTR implemented a
revised timetable on 15 July. So far, this timetable is performing better and is providing a more stable base for passengers. The focus of the 15 July changes has been around protecting peak services, reducing the number of on the day cancellations and reducing significant gaps between services at specific stations.

In the 15 July timetable, GTR removed 170 off-peak services and 40 peak services from the May 2018 timetable. However on weekdays, GTR is still running c. 200 more services than before May 2018.

In September GTR plan to introduce 8 high peak services and 8 shoulder peak services from September to December to increase frequency and capacity in the network. At the time of writing evidence suggests that GTR’s interim timetable has bedded in well with on-the-day cancellations and delay minutes significantly down and Public Performance Measures up, particularly on Thameslink and Great Northern compare to immediately preceding 15 July.

Assuming that these service introduction continue to go well it is expected that the full May 2018 weekday timetable should be fully introduced later this year.
Glaister Review, GTR’s Remedial Plan and the Department’s review of GTR

The Department takes the impact of the 20 May timetable changes very seriously, that is why we have commissioned two reviews into what went wrong with the implementation.

First, the independent Glaister Review is underway and seeks to understand the factors that led to the disruption following the timetable change in May – our aim is to make sure we learn lessons and this does not happen again.

Secondly, the Department has also conducted a review of GTR to establish whether they have met, and continue to meet, their contractual obligations in the planning and delivery of the May timetable, including ensuring there is sufficient capability and competence inside the franchise. As part of this process we are looking at whether GTR have breached their contract with the Department.

Glaister Review

The ORR is leading an independent inquiry, into the May timetable implementation and the deliverability of future timetable changes. This will be chaired by Stephen Glaister, a transport expert and current chair of the independent regulator – the ORR. In parallel to the inquiry, the RNP, which has devolved responsibility for the contract, is assessing whether Northern met their contractual obligations in the planning and delivery of this timetable change.

The ORR has published the terms of reference for the independent inquiry into disruption caused by the May rail timetable change. The ORR is independent of Government and contains a huge amount of industry experience and is the right organisation to review how this disruption happened and make recommendations so we can avoid it happening again. The ORR has put strong governance controls in place, including an expert review panel, to ensure that any scrutiny required of its own past activities is fair and impartial.

Northern and NR have also commissioned an independent report of the disruption which will identify lessons learned and contribute to the Glaister review. This will be kept under close review by the RNP, on behalf of DfT and TfN.

The Department’s review of GTR

Since the May timetable disruption the Department has conducted a review of GTR’s performance in the delivery of the timetable change. We are assessing whether GTR met their contractual obligations in the planning and delivery of this timetable change, and whether these issues could have been reasonably foreseen and different action taken to prevent the high levels of disruption passengers are experiencing.

The assessment covers whether the operator had sufficient resources and skills to deliver the new timetable, if drivers could have been trained in a faster and more effective way, and will examine the contingency and risk management arrangements in place.

Work undertaken so far points towards liability for the severe disruption that followed the May 2018 timetable change being shared across the industry. The Department is currently assessing this to determine GTR’s level of liability for the disruption, alongside continuing to scrutinise GTR’s performance levels against its contractual obligations.

If it is found that GTR have breached their contract with the Department we will take appropriate action which will depend on the severity of the breach, in accordance with our published enforcement policy.7

Industry plans for December 2018

Timetables take months to plan and implement. We have been clear that the May timetable was finalised too late, which has caused disruption for passengers in parts of the country.

The Department requested that Andrew Haines, as incoming CEO of NR (and who will be in the role when the December timetable change is implemented) led industry in reviewing the options for December. His remit, working with the whole rail industry, has been to ensure plans for December are robust and can be delivered without unnecessary disruption.

As a result of this work with industry, the scale of planned timetable change in December has been greatly reduced to minimise the risk of severe disruption. Industry has been clear that there are no zero risk options, including nominally remaining on the May 18 timetable. This is because even this option requires industry to re-work some of the timetable options – in some cases because physical changes to the network mean that changes cannot be avoided. The proposed solution whereby some operators remain on their May timetable whereas other will move to their December timetable was recommended as the right approach. Not least industry’s considerations needed to reflect the requirements of operators outside the remit of the Department.

While the rail industry is working on a revised timetable that delivers as many passenger benefits as possible, clearly change in scope for December means that it is likely that some upgrades that were due to be introduced in December will now be introduced later than planned.

We have asked industry to review its plans for the May 2019 timetable. NR has already advised the Department that the scale of planned national change for May 2019 is greater than it has capacity to deliver reliably. Collectively they are assessing the deliverability of proposed changes, considering the risks of different proposals in particular around infrastructure, rolling stock and operational readiness. We are clear that a sensible, risk based decision process is essential. However, this will mean that some passenger benefits will be deferred until it is clear they can be delivered reliably.

The Department will ensure the industry takes into account the findings of the independent Glaister Review in future timetable changes.
Lessons for future timetabling

It is vitally important to ensure lessons are learnt from the serious issues with the introduction of the May 2018 timetable. The timescales set out above for how timetabling works means that we need to take both immediate action and consider whether changes are needed for the longer term.

As such the Department took immediate steps to ask industry to review plans for December 18. Similarly, industry as a whole is also assessing the right approach to May 19.

The ORR review headed by Stephen Glaister will be taking a more fundamental look at the process; reviewing how timetable changes are introduced to better understand the root causes of exactly what went wrong, so that future changes can be implemented more smoothly.

This review will report its interim results at the end of September to the Department. Clearly, the Department will be supporting fully this work and will carefully consider any recommendations that are made.

*September 2018*
Annex A – The timetable change process

**Timeline**

1. **D55**
   - Start of initial consultation period
2. **D40**
   - *Priority Date*
   - TDCs submit TT
3. **D30**
   - NR assess all bids & validate TT
4. **D26**
   - NR publish new TT to industry
5. **D22**
   - End of appeal period
6. **D20**
   - Final TT published to industry
7. **D10**
   - Informed Traveller Deadline
8. **T-12**
   - TT available to public

**NR Process**

- Publish Strategic Capacity Statement
- Sale of Access Rights
  - Submit Timetable bid to NR
  - TCRAG Approval?
  - Yes: Amend and Resubmit TT
  - No: Continue refinement of TT
- Receive TT bids from all operators; begin assessment
- NR Assess all Bids & Validate TT
- Final changes
- TT Offered to TOCs
- TT Offer from NR
- Appeal?
  - Yes: TCRAG
  - No: Continue refinement of TT

**Operator Process**

- Develop new TT strategy to meet franchise train service requirements (no defined timeline)
- Notify Industry of Major TT Change
- Public Consultation (min 12 weeks; start date not defined)
- Detailed TT design
- Initial Resource Plan
- Continued refinement of TT

**NB:** ‘D’ numbers are process milestones defined in Part D of the Network Code where ‘D’ refers to the timetable change date.