Transport Committee

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Luke Pollard MP
Ian Stewart MP

Powers

The committee is one of the departmental select committees, the powers of which are set out in House of Commons Standing Orders, principally in SO No 152. These are available on the internet via www.parliament.uk.

Publication

Committee reports are published on the Committee’s website at www.parliament.uk/transcom and in print by Order of the House.

Evidence relating to this report is published on the inquiry publications page of the Committee’s website.

Committee staff

The current staff of the Committee are Gordon Clarke (Committee Clerk), Ed Faulkner (Second Clerk), James Clarke (Committee Specialist), Nerys Davies (Committee Specialist), Andrew Haylen (Committee Specialist), Deborah Courtney (Senior Committee Assistant), Michelle Owens, (Committee Assistant), Estelle Currie (Senior Media Officer) and Oliver Florence (Media Officer).

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**Rail timetable changes: May 2018**

**Summary**

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Summary

Far from marking the intended substantial improvement for rail passengers across the north and in London and the south of England, the 20 May national rail timetable change and the weeks that followed will live long in the memories of a large proportion of rail users as a prolonged period of intensely inconvenient, costly and, on occasions, potentially dangerous disruption.

Rail passengers caught up in the timetabling crisis do not deserve to face an increase in their fares in 2019. We urge the rail industry and Government to consider all options to keep any regulated fares increase in 2019 to a minimum. Northern, TransPennine Express, Thameslink, and Great Northern’s 2018 season ticket holders should receive a discount, equivalent to any increase announced this year, on renewed season tickets in 2019.

The May 2018 timetabling crisis was in part a consequence of the astonishing complexity of a disaggregated railway in which the interrelated private train companies operating on publicly-owned and managed infrastructure have competing commercial interests. While there can be little doubt that “root and branch” reform of governance structures is necessary, passengers cannot wait for the Government to implement the recommendations of the Williams Rail Review from 2020. Key lessons from the experience of passengers must be learned and addressed now or in short order. The rail industry, Department for Transport and the ORR must:

- ensure effective policies are in place—and are enforced—to assist disabled passengers when things go wrong on the railway;
- set a measurable target for implementation of “simple, one-click automated” compensation schemes, including, though franchise renegotiations if necessary, piloting such schemes on parts of the network worst affected by the timetabling crisis by the end of 2019; and
- ensure sufficient time in future timetabling processes for ongoing and meaningful public consultation, and commit to work with rail users to assess and mitigate adverse local effects of the May 2018 timetable change.

Even though all the main stakeholders had been aware for several years that the scale of change planned for 20 May was unprecedented, the industry did not adhere to its long-established system for timetable changes, which clearly sets out well-understood processes and timescales. The reasons for this were different in the north and south but the ultimate effects were the same. There was simply not enough time to put everything in place to ensure a reasonably smooth implementation. People who rely on our railways have been very badly let down by the whole system, including Network Rail, the train operating companies, the Department for Transport (DfT) and the Office of Rail and Road (ORR). We endorse the ORR’s finding that “nobody took charge”; this is extraordinary and totally unacceptable.

In relation to industry structures, the immediate priority must be establishing effective oversight of the next national rail timetable changes. In the short term, we are content
for the Chief Executive of Network Rail to take charge, but the Secretary of State must make clear the extent of Mr Haines’ decision-making power over whether and when the next timetable change goes ahead.

We await the ORR’s final recommendations, but our clear view is that the national rail timetabling process requires genuinely independent oversight, following accepted principles of professional project management, including the appointment of an independent Project Sponsor or Senior Responsible Owner for the whole national timetabling project. We believe this role would need to be located outside of Network Rail, so that it is more effectively insulated from commercial and political pressures.
1 Introduction

The 20 May 2018 timetable change

1. For several years, 20 May 2018 had been marked in the diary of the railway industry as a momentous day. The culmination of substantial investment in major infrastructure projects and delivery of new rolling stock was to facilitate the introduction of thousands of new services, providing much needed additional capacity for tens of thousands of rail passengers.¹

2. In the north of England, the changes planned for 20 May were to be a substantial step towards unlocking the benefits of the Great North Rail Project, with “brand new trains, including more than 500 new carriages, room for 40,000 extra passengers and more than 2,800 extra services a week.” In London and the south, 20 May was intended to deliver around 70% of the capacity benefits of the hugely ambitious Thameslink Programme, which aims ultimately to facilitate “tube-like” service frequencies, with trains every two or three minutes on new infrastructure through London.²

3. The industry has a long-established system, with clearly set out and well-understood processes, for changing the national rail timetable every six months, in May and December each year. These changes vary in scale. They are often relatively minor tweaks and, when they go to plan, many passengers will be able to access additional services, but many others will be unaffected or scarcely notice the change at all. Timetable changes are crucial for the rail industry, delivering extra capacity to better meet demand, and enabling train operating companies to meet contractual obligations and increase their revenues.³

4. The scale of investment and complexity of introducing new services enabled by the infrastructure projects described above meant that the change planned for 20 May 2018 was unprecedented in scale. It would have complex effects across multiple franchises and very large portions of the national rail network. It involved 42,300 individual changes, affecting 46% of all passenger services on the network. While there had been an increase in the scale of timetable changes in recent years, 20 May 2018 represented a very considerable step-change. It was around four times the scale of a typical six-monthly timetable change.⁴

² Department for Transport (DfT) (RTC0084)
³ Qq119–20 [Jo Kaye]
⁴ Office of Rail and Road (ORR), Independent Inquiry into the Timetable Disruption in May 2018, September 2018 [hereafter, ORR, September 2018], figure B1; see also ‘Biggest rail timetable change in decades’, Transport Focus (accessed 26 October 2018)
Failure to deliver and effects on passengers

5. Far from marking the intended substantial improvement for rail passengers across the north and in London and the south of England, 20 May and the weeks that followed will live long in the memories of a large proportion of rail users as a prolonged period of intensely inconvenient, costly and, on occasions, when there were very late cancellations and platform changes, potentially dangerous disruption. In the weeks following 20 May, Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR), the operator of the largest passenger franchise on the network, including the Thameslink, Great Northern and Southern commuter brands, covering much of London and the south, failed to run about 470 (12%) of its planned 3,880 daily services. Arriva Rail North, which operates Northern rail services across the whole of the north of England, did not run approximately 310 (11%) of its planned 2,810 services per week day. There were very substantial knock-on effects on TransPennine Express (TPE).
Figure 2: Proportion of trains that ran before and after 20 May

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>GTR</th>
<th>Northern</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week commencing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 May 2018</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 May 2018</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 May 2018</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27 May 2018</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pre-Timetable        | Post-Timetable|

Source: ORR, September 2018; days affected by industrial action or engineering work have been adjusted using data from unaffected days in the same week.

6. Peak time GTR and Northern services that did run were often crowded and extremely unreliable. The number of delayed services on GTR more than trebled and did not return to pre-20 May levels until late June. Northern’s delays doubled before stabilising upon introduction of an emergency timetable on 4 June. This was only achieved, however, by removing 165 services from the timetable. About 75% of these services were reinstated on 29 July. GTR continued to run a very haphazard emergency timetable until 15 July, when it introduced an “interim timetable”, which was still some way short of what was planned for 20 May but was intended to provide a level of consistency and reliability.⁷
7. The statistics cannot do justice to the severe effects on people's lives. The disruption cost passengers money, with working people forced to pay for taxis and additional childcare costs, for example. Businesses and local economies suffered. Children were late for school. Anxiety about getting to and from work put a considerable strain on people's mental health. Confusion resulting from last minute cancellations and platform changes subjected passengers to "uncontrolled risks" in over-crowded stations. Effective communication broke down. The situation was chaotic.

8 See, for example, Q275 [Emily Ketchin]
9 Harpenden Thameslink Commuters' Group [RTC0047]
10 See, for example, Miss J Baron [RTC0075]; Which? [RTC0077]; St Albans Commuter and Passenger Action Group [RTC0096]
11 Letter dated 5 July 2018 from Ian Prosser, HM Chief Inspector of Railways, to Patrick Verwer, Managing Director, GTR [not published]
8. Transport Focus, the national passenger watchdog, gave its assessment of the scale of the problems:

“When you add together the number of Thameslink passengers, Great Northern passengers, Northern passengers and, don’t forget, TransPennine—who were very much caught up in this but have slightly evaded the limelight—you are probably dealing with about one in five of Britain’s passengers potentially affected by this timetable crisis. The scale of the problem, adding together all those individual stories, is big and powerful.”

Figure 4: Effects on passengers

![Figure 4: Effects on passengers](Source: ORR, September 2018)

The context of our inquiry and this Report

9. In a Statement on the timetabling crisis on 4 June, the Secretary of State for Transport, Rt Hon Chris Grayling MP, announced that Professor Stephen Glaister, Chair of the Office of Rail and Road (ORR, the economic and safety Regulator), would lead an inquiry, to “consider why the system as a whole failed to produce and implement an effective timetable.” The ORR published its interim report on 20 September. This focused on the
contributory factors in what went wrong. It identified a collective failure across the train operating companies, Network Rail, the Government and, as set out in a separate “prior role review”, the ORR itself. A key conclusion was that “nobody took charge”.  

10. Our inquiry, and to some extent this Report, overlaps with the initial stage of the ORR’s inquiry into what went wrong. We draw on the ORR’s report and evidence to our inquiry to summarise these findings in chapter 2. The next stage for the ORR will be to make recommendations to ensure future timetable changes are handled effectively. These recommendations are expected before the end of 2018.

11. We first heard oral evidence, from Arriva Rail North, GTR and Network Rail, on 18 June, by which point it was clear that passengers were facing a prolonged period of severe disruption. On 9 July, we issued terms of reference for written submissions from the key stakeholders and passengers, and heard oral evidence from the Chairs of the Thameslink 2018 Industry Readiness Board and Independent Assurance Panel, who were key parts of additional Thameslink governance structures put in place by the Secretary of State.

12. We took the opportunity, on 24 July, when we had him before us in our InterCity East Coast inquiry, to ask Mr Grayling several questions about his accountability for what was happening and what he was doing to put things right.

13. We invited passengers to share their experiences via video submissions on twitter using #railtimetabling and heard oral evidence, on 5 September, directly from affected passengers and representative groups.

14. Finally, on 22 October, we again questioned the Secretary of State, alongside senior DfT officials, and then heard evidence from Professor Glaister and ORR colleagues. A full list of witnesses is included at the end of this Report. Terms of reference for the inquiry and related evidence are available on our website.

15. The DfT chose 20 September, the day the ORR’s interim report was published, to announce a much broader, “root and branch” review of the rail industry, including commercial models, structures and fares, in the light of the timetabling crisis and the recent collapse of the InterCity East Coast franchise. This review will be chaired by Keith Williams, Deputy Chairman of John Lewis Partnership and former Chief Executive of British Airways. The Williams review is intended to result in a White Paper on fundamental change in the rail industry by autumn 2019, with reforms to be implemented from 2020.

16. This Report therefore makes recommendations in the context of the likelihood of recommended reforms to rail industry structures and governance arrangements in the longer term. There can now be little doubt that such change is necessary. However, three further national rail timetable changes are currently scheduled before 2020. Our first aim is to ensure urgent steps are taken to avoid a repeat of May 2018, and that passengers’ interests are central to the approach and protected.

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14 ORR, September 2018, p 5, ORR, Prior Role Review, September 2018;
15 Oral evidence, 24 July, Qs326–51 (HC 891)
16 www.parliament.uk/transcom
18 One in December 2018, for which plans have already been scaled back, and two in 2019.
17. While the ORR focuses on governance and decision-making structures in relation to timetabling, and Mr Williams begins his more “root and branch” review, we want to ensure that key lessons from the experience of passengers following May 2018 are learned and addressed now or in short order. The timetabling crisis demonstrates that urgent, passenger-focused change is required in at least three key areas:

- ensuring effective policies are in place—and are enforced—to assist disabled passengers when things go wrong on the railway (chapter 3);

- fixing inadequate and unfair compensation schemes, which place the onus on passengers to make claims, and moving more quickly towards more automated, or automatic, compensation (chapter 4); and

- ensuring sufficient time in the process for proper impact assessment of, and consistent, ongoing and meaningful public consultation on, all significant service changes.

It has been the policy of successive governments that passengers not taxpayers should increasingly bear the cost of financing the railway. With passengers facing an annual regulated fares increase of up to 3.2% in January 2019, a key focus for Mr Williams’ review must be establishing a much clearer link between the quality and reliability of train services and the fares passengers pay (chapter 5).

18. This year was intended to be a positive story for rail users; instead the passenger railway perhaps reached its nadir. This must now be the catalyst for genuine change to the benefit of people who rely on our railways.

19. See, Rail fares and ticketing, House of Commons Library briefing paper SN1904, February 2017
2  Why did the system fail?

19. The ORR’s September 2018 interim reports sets out at length, and in technical detail, the circumstances that led to the May 2018 timetabling crisis. Evidence to our inquiry broadly corroborates the ORR’s findings and we are therefore confident that the facts have been established. Below we draw on the ORR’s analysis and evidence to our inquiry to summarise, as accessibly as we can, how 20 May went so badly awry, including the part played by each of the key stakeholders, and consider the steps required in the short and longer term to avoid a repeat of the situation and better protect the interests of rail passengers.

Network Rail

20. Network Rail had two key functions in relation to delivering the May timetable: its Infrastructure Projects (IP) teams in the north and the south needed to deliver the physical works; and its separate, central System Operator (SO) function, comprising about 700 people, about 400 of whom work on timetabling, had the unenviable task of putting the national timetable together. This involved managing the inevitable mass of conflicts amongst the enormous number of service changes on multiple, interrelated commercial franchises. The process deploys specialist IT but also requires a high level of manual intervention from very highly skilled people.20

21. To comply with the long-established and well-understood timescales for six-monthly timetable changes, Network Rail SO was required to produce a first version of the national timetable in November 2017. It did so; however, events in late 2017 and early 2018 meant the November 2017 timetables for the north and southeast of England were essentially “invalid” and had to be rewritten.21

22. The reasons for this were different in the north and the south, but the ultimate effect was the same: the timescales for the industry to prepare for an unprecedently large national rail timetable change were condensed into a far shorter period than standard industry practice. The processes are set out in Part D of the “Network Code”, which codifies how private operators’ rights of access to the publicly-owned network translate into the construction of the national rail timetable.22 There was simply not enough time to put everything in place—for example, train diagrams (planning how to have trains in the right locations), driver and crew rosters and route-training required for drivers before they can drive trains on new or updated infrastructure—to ensure a reasonably smooth implementation.23

23. Delays to the physical works were the key contributory factor in the north. A key plank of the Great North Rail Project, the North West Electrification Project (NWEP), which had already been delayed by one year from December 2016 to December 2017—placing an even greater onus on the timetable change planned for May 2018—faced further, unforeseen delays during 2017. The Infrastructure Project (IP) team faced worse than anticipated ground conditions. Several innovative solutions were tried and failed, further

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20 DfT (RTC0084)
21 Q121 [Jo Kaye]
23 ORR, September 2018; See also, for example, Q10 [Nick Brown]; Q21 [David Brown]
compressing the timescale for the project. A final attempt to catch up with construction work was made over the Christmas period 2017, but again encountered problems with unfavourable ground conditions. By January 2018, there were no acceptable options to recover the works in time to complete phase 4 of NWEP, electrification of the “Bolton Corridor” from Bolton to Manchester, before introduction of the May 2018 timetable change.\textsuperscript{24}

24. Jo Kaye, Managing Director, Network Rail SO, succinctly described the situation in January 2018: “The timetable that we had completed [in November 2017] simply could not work without that infrastructure in place.”\textsuperscript{25} Gary Bogan, the DfT’s Director, Rail North Partnership, explained that:

“The plan was to have an electrification route from Bolton to Manchester, and the trains that were going to do that were electric, and the diesel trains that the company ran were going to go across the network to strengthen services. Instead, there was, effectively, a missing train fleet; we did not have the electrification.”\textsuperscript{26}

Once it was known that NWEP phase 4 would not be completed in time, there were very broadly only two options: postpone the implementation of the May timetable change or rewrite the timetable, in a much-compressed timescale, to match the available infrastructure.

25. David Brown, Managing Director of Arriva Rail North, reported that Northern made a request in January 2018 to “roll over” the existing timetable i.e. to postpone the May 2018 change. Mr Brown told us that Arriva put this request to Network Rail SO in late January, whereupon there was “an industry conversation with other train operating companies”. It was clear from those discussions that “a significant number of players” did not support a postponement. The request was therefore declined.\textsuperscript{27} Jo Kaye explained that:

“If we had rolled the timetable over, we would have had to roll over the whole national timetable. There are a number of operators operating on the network today. The national timetable is a culmination of all those things pieced together, and they all work together. [ … ] There was not the simple option of just continuing with one plan for one operator, because we had already made changes for other train operators who use the same infrastructure. That is why we had to rewrite the timetable rather than just roll it over. [ … ].”\textsuperscript{28}

26. David Brown described the scale of the task then facing Arriva Rail North and Network Rail SO’s timetabling staff:

“That meant that [Northern and Network Rail SO] had to plan the whole timetable in a period of 16 weeks rather than 40 weeks. We had to look
at options for completely rewriting a timetable for the north of England, which is 10% to 11% of the total national rail network, in four months—16 weeks compared with 40 weeks.”

27. We wanted to know why the Network Rail IP team had not realised before January 2018 that the necessary works would not be completed in time for May. Martin Frobisher, Network Rail’s Route Managing Director, London North Western, told us that, despite the experience of a previous year-long delay and the multitude of problems experienced during 2017:

“We genuinely believed that it was possible to recover the programme with a short line closure through to December, but by January it was absolutely clear that it would have required a five-week line closure and really difficult circumstances for many people who commute from places such as Bolton.”

28. The ORR found that in continuing efforts, beyond autumn 2017, to complete phase 4 NWEP electrification:

“[…] the consequential risks to the introduction of the May 2018 timetable were compounded by an excessively optimistic approach to planning and re-planning mitigating actions to catch up […]”

**Infrastructure programme governance structures**

**Great North Rail Project**

29. While by January 2018 it was “too late” to implement a workable solution, the ORR found that Network Rail SO had been “best placed” to understand and address the escalating risks in autumn 2017 or earlier, when it may have still been possible to advocate workable alternatives.

30. It was not entirely clear, however, from evidence to our inquiry that SO understood this to be its remitted role. Jo Kaye emphasised to us that the timetabling processes, set out in the Network Code, were industry-wide processes. Furthermore, SO told the ORR’s inquiry that:

“[…] had it decided in autumn 2017 not to assume that the NWEP infrastructure would be ready, it would have been ‘overruled’ in favour of the advice from the project team because it would have delayed benefits to passengers.”

31. There were both internal and external pressures on Network Rail to find a solution for NWEP and adhere to the timescale. The ORR found the North of England Programme Board “faced substantial pressure from senior levels of Network Rail” not to further delay

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29 Q14
30 Q141
31 ORR, September 2018, summary of findings, para 44
32 ORR, Independent Inquiry into the Timetable Disruption in May 2018, September 2018, summary of findings, para 44
33 Q127
34 ORR, September 2018, summary of findings, para 61
the timescale of NWEP. Professor Glaister and colleagues were equally clear in oral evidence to our inquiry that the then Chief Executive of Network Rail, Mark Carne, felt under similar pressure from DfT Ministers not to further delay the project.\(^\text{36}\)

32. Other bodies were aware of the escalating risks posed by NWEP to the May timetable, but they told us they were ultimately reliant on Network Rail IP’s assessment of the deliverability of NWEP. Ruth Hannant, DfT Director General for Rail, confirmed that in autumn 2017 Network Rail was “saying that they thought they would be able to complete the works.”\(^\text{37}\) Gary Bogan, the DfT’s Director, Rail North Partnership, confirmed that he had been present at all relevant board meetings. Before Christmas 2017, he “heard the level of confidence and commitment to be finished by the time we came back in early January, only to find that there had been a setback.”\(^\text{38}\)

33. No single body appears to have been primarily focused on systemic risks. The DfT-chaired North of England Programme Board, which includes Transport for the North, Network Rail, Northern Rail and TPE, is responsible for delivery of rail infrastructure projects in the north of England. It is one of several regional programme boards set up following the recommendations of the 2015 Bowe review, which considered lessons learned from earlier infrastructure project overruns.\(^\text{39}\) The ORR’s interim report noted that regional programme boards were not explicitly remitted to consider systemic risks, such as to national rail timetable changes, arising from its infrastructure projects. The North of England Programme Board, like the other DfT-chaired regional boards, was focused primarily on project delivery and cost control.\(^\text{40}\)

**Thameslink**

34. The circumstances in the south were different. The infrastructure was available and not a factor in the May 2018 timetable disruption. A key problem was deciding how to phase in Thameslink services, using new Class 700 rolling stock over the new infrastructure to bring them up to 24 trains per hour (tph) at peak times. The initial plan, agreed by the DfT, Network Rail and GTR was for 20 tph from May 2018 and 24 tph from December 2018.\(^\text{41}\)

35. In recognition of the complexity of the task and the need to bring the range of interested parties together to work collaboratively, the Secretary of State established an extra layer of governance, in addition to the existing DfT-chaired Thameslink Programme Board. In January 2017, he appointed Chris Gibb, a hugely experienced operational railway expert and former Chief Operating Officer of Virgin Trains, to independently Chair a Thameslink 2018 Industry Readiness Board (IRB). Mr Gibb described the IRB as follows:

“[…] It is a collection of the companies involved in delivery of the Thameslink project: all the train companies extending from what is now

\(^{35}\) ORR, September 2018, summary of findings para 47

\(^{36}\) Q598 (Professor Glaister and Dan Brown)

\(^{37}\) Q470

\(^{38}\) Q470

\(^{39}\) ORR, September 2018, summary of findings para 47; p 171

\(^{40}\) National Audit Office, Department for Transport: Update on the Thameslink programme, HC 413 Session 2017–19, November 2017, para 3.22
London North Eastern Railway to GTR, Southeastern and Arriva Rail London, all the Network Rail routes, the Network Rail SO, the Department for Transport and the ORR. […]

[…]. Everybody comes, very diligently, and everybody has an opinion and a contribution. There is lots of disagreement. There are people with different contractual obligations. There are different opinions, and it is a tough meeting to chair.”

Mr Gibb emphasised that the IRB had “chewed over hundreds of issues” since January 2017 and, despite the difficulties described, resolved many of them. The ORR confirmed to us that the IRB had, in many ways, done a good job.

36. However, coming to an agreed approach to Thameslink phasing and getting a formal DfT decision appears to have been a deeply problematic and slow process. Mr Gibb had already considered Thameslink phasing in his December 2016 report to the Secretary of State on improving Southern rail services, also on GTR’s franchise, after a prolonged period of disruption in 2016 caused in part by the Thameslink infrastructure works. Mr Gibb had then recommended the creation of the IRB to “look at the phasing in detail.” He told us that: “By early 2017, it was clear that everybody on the [IRB] wanted it phased [more gradually]. Nobody believed that it could be done in one go [in 2018].”

37. The ORR’s report confirmed that both the Thameslink Programme Board and the IRB supported re-phasing May 2018 Thameslink service introduction down from 20 to 18 tph, then ramping up to 20, 22 and 24 tph over the three further six-monthly timetable changes, reaching full implementation in December 2019. Mr Gibb told us that GTR first recommended this approach to the DfT in April 2017. The decision was not formally approved by the Secretary of State until 31 October 2017.

38. The consequences for the production of the May timetable were grossly underestimated. As Peter Wilkinson, the DfT’s Managing Director of Passenger Services, put it:

“Nobody estimated that taking two trains out would be terribly high risk. It turned out to be very difficult to achieve, the reason being that the GTR timetable is interwoven with at least three of the major timetables on the east coast and the midland main line. Taking two trains out meant a lot more restructuring of rosters and diagrams that had interdependencies with other lines of route than had been estimated.”

39. The ORR found that, while the DfT “could not have reasonably foreseen the risk of needing to rewrite the timetable […]:”

“In hindsight, had the final decision by DfT to phase the introduction of services from 18tph been aligned with the schedule for developing the
timetable in August 2017, the unpredicted consequences for the Thameslink timetable may have been avoided and the consequential risks of a timetabling failure on the scale experienced would have been greatly reduced.”

40. We wanted to know why it took so long to reach a formal decision approved by the Secretary of State. Ruth Hannant told us that, in April 2017, DfT officials told GTR to “go away and work up proposals”. It did so and came back with “initial proposals some time towards the end of May”. The Secretary of State’s “decision in principle to proceed” was given after a discussion with Chris Gibb “at the end of July or beginning of August”:

“There was then a contractual process that we had to go through with GTR to turn that decision in principle into something embedded in their contractual terms. They came to us with a final proposition in October, and it was agreed by Ministers in October.”

41. Ruth Hannant insisted that “At no time during that period did anybody say to us, ‘You need to accelerate the contractual discussions.’” This is a point of contention between the DfT and GTR, which told the ORR’s inquiry that it “verbally advised DfT that it needed a decision by June 2017”. The ORR’s report also noted an email from GTR to the DfT on 25 August had emphasised the “time-critical nature of the decisions”.

42. The ORR’s inquiry confirmed that the period from April to October involved a “long and complex process in which many errors and service conflicts with other operators needed to be resolved”. Its conclusion was that, within this highly complex set of circumstances, “the only way in which these risks could have been avoided is for the advice on the re-planning of phasing to have been sought earlier.”

43. Furthermore, the ORR was critical of the structure of the board established by the Secretary of State to provide that advice. Its report, for example, noted that the IRB, and its associated risk assessment body, the Independent Assurance Panel (IAP), had no powers to commission third parties to gather evidence to test the assurances it was being given by GTR about readiness for May 2018. Dan Brown, the ORR’s Director, Strategy and Policy, elaborated in oral evidence, telling us that the IAP had “a relatively informal style of working”, in which they were “kicking the tyres on GTR’s plans”, which they took “largely at face value”. He believed the IAP was “largely misnamed” as “there was not a great deal of independent assurance of the sort of detail that might reasonably have been expected [ … ]”.

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49 ORR, September 2018, para 5.43
50 Q500
51 ORR, September 2018, p 130
52 ORR, September 2018, para 5.41
53 ORR September 2018, part C, para 40
54 Q575
44. When we first questioned the Secretary of State about the timetabling crisis in July, he emphasised that he and his Department delegated responsibility for the operation of the railway to industry experts. He told us he: did not “run the railways”; was “not responsible for rail timetabling”; and that the Department “had rail professionals to do that”. He also pointed out that the IRB had not, at any stage, indicated to him that there was a risk of serious timetable failure in May 2018:

“[ … ] I did not make a decision on the introduction of the new timetable in May. I received an indication from those who are in place to plan the new timetable introduction. We had an independent assurance panel and we had an Industry Readiness Board, both of which recommended that the timetable change should go ahead.”

45. In October, when we had the opportunity to question Mr Grayling with the benefit of the ORR’s findings, we put it to him that the governance structures, which he had established, were inadequate and that he and his Department ought to accept a level of responsibility. He reiterated:

“At no point did anybody in that board come to me and say, ‘We are not able to get the job done.’ At no point did anybody raise with me concerns about the workings of the board. I saw Chris Gibb from time to time, and he assured me that progress was being made towards the May timetable and towards implementing the Thameslink decision. Nothing ever crossed my desk that gave me reason to think that that body was not capable of doing its job.”

46. Mr Grayling did accept that the length of time taken to come to a decision on Thameslink phasing had been a material factor in the timetabling crisis. More broadly, he emphatically agreed that he was responsible for establishing effective governance structures in the rail industry. He emphasised his recent appointment of Keith Williams to lead the independent Rail Review, telling us:

“[ … ] If I am guilty of anything, it is of not moving fast enough to deliver change. I have said to this Committee over the last couple of years that I believe we need a more integrated railway. [ … ]

What this summer has convinced me is that we need to move much faster. There was a process of evolution that I judged to be the right one to avoid putting the industry through excessive change. I now think that it needs significant change, and that is what the process I have established since the timetable issues arose is designed to achieve.”

Culpability of the train companies

47. Arriva Rail North and GTR told us about the extreme difficulties they faced in preparing to implement new timetables within unprecedentedly compressed timescales. Northern Rail faced an additional infrastructure-related setback as late as March 2018,
when NWEP phase 3, from Blackpool to Preston, was delayed by three weeks. This meant the electrified infrastructure did not enter service until 11 May, creating a very late, additional driver training requirement on the route, for example.\(^5\) David Brown of Arriva Rail North reported that Northern was still “piecing together the rosters and the diagrams only days and evenings before” implementation on 20 May.\(^6\) Charles Horton, the then Chief Executive of GTR who resigned in June in the wake of the timetabling crisis, said:

“All the detailed, complicated resource-planning tasks that we would normally spread over at least a 12-week period we had to complete in a three-week period. That caused us multiple problems in terms of the deployment of our drivers to that new timetable, with, ultimately, a gap between the drivers we had available to us and the skills they held and the work that we were requiring them to do, with the resulting cancellations and delays […]”\(^6\)

**Northern**

48. The ORR acknowledged the severe difficulties faced by the train companies. Its inquiry found that Northern had “engaged properly with Network Rail’s timetabling process, and the factors that caused the timetable to be replanned at a late stage were outside of its control.” In the circumstances, Northern could not, for example, have “reasonably accelerated the train crew diagramming process”.\(^\text{62}\)

49. However, the ORR found that Northern did not demonstrate that it “understood the full ramifications of the events leading up to the timetable change”. Despite the escalating difficulties, particularly in relation to driver training, as late as 9 May it expected “to be in a position to run a full service from the implementation of the new timetable on 20 May”.\(^\text{63}\) On 17 May, it briefed the DfT about the “high risk of poor operational performance and identified potential hotspots for capacity and service decrements”. In an email to stakeholders on 18 May it warned of “some localised service disruption at potentially very short-notice.”\(^\text{64}\) David Brown’s admission to us that “the full impact only became apparent when the timetable went live” was cited by the ORR as clear evidence of Northern’s failure to comprehend the magnitude of the situation.\(^\text{65}\)

50. Ultimately this meant that Northern Rail passengers who faced severe disruption to services were not provided with information or advice “that would have allowed them to manage the impact”.\(^\text{66}\) Northern also failed to provide additional information or support tailored to the needs of disabled passengers (we discuss this further in chapter 3).\(^\text{67}\)

**GTR**

51. GTR finally received a fully reworked timetable on 9 April 2018, leaving just six weeks, rather than the 12 set out in the Network Code, to “optimise and roster staff”.\(^\text{68}\) Driver

\(^{5}\) ORR, September 2018, para 2.42–3  
^{6}\) ORR, September 2018, para 4.30  
^{61}\) ORR, September 2018, para 2.42–3  
^{62}\) ORR, September 2018, para 4.30  
^{63}\) ORR, September 2018, para 4.50  
^{64}\) ORR, September 2018, para 4.51  
^{65}\) ORR, September 2018, para 4.52  
^{66}\) ORR, September 2018, para 4.53  
^{67}\) ORR, September 2018, summary of findings, para 91  
^{68}\) ORR, September 2018, para 5.54
rosters were not finalised and posted up until 18 May, just two days prior to the timetable change, rather than the usual six weeks.\textsuperscript{69} GTR agreed a “rolling deployment” approach with the DfT, in which it would work up to full deployment of the 20 May timetable over a three-week period. The intention was to initially remove 80–100 services per day.\textsuperscript{70}

52. Charles Horton told us that “It was only in that final week, on the Thursday before the timetable came in, that we realised the problem was more serious than we expected”.\textsuperscript{71} This is another point of contention with the Department; the DfT’s view is that GTR “plainly were just not ready” and would not have been ready even if all the issues around the timetabling and rostering had been taken away.\textsuperscript{72}

53. The ORR found that “GTR had a much greater ability to prepare and test their plans than Northern.”\textsuperscript{73} GTR managers reported to the inquiry that the company had “a history [ … ] of running with far less drivers than [ … ] we needed”. The ORR noted that GTR had a known driver shortfall at the outset of its franchise agreement in 2014.\textsuperscript{74} Our predecessor Committee highlighted this issue in a Report published in October 2016.\textsuperscript{75} GTR had realised as early as 2016 that it would not have a sufficient number of fully trained drivers for May 2018 and planned mitigations, including borrowing drivers from the Southeastern franchise, using “pilot” drivers on the new infrastructure through central London and relying on its drivers to work on rest days.\textsuperscript{76}

54. When a greater than expected driver shortfall became apparent on the drawing up of diagrams in April 2018, it planned further mitigations, including: cancelling late night services; transferring driver trainers to driver roles; transferring Southern and Great Northern drivers to Thameslink; and seeking drivers with relevant training from freight operators. The ORR noted that these mitigations were either “extremely limited” (GTR found only four additional drivers from freight train operators, for example) or created knock-on problems (moving driver trainers to driving roles meant they could not contribute to alleviating the backlog in new driver training).\textsuperscript{77}

55. The ORR found that GTR “did not adequately recognise the exceptional scale of change and the probable risks arising from the May timetable.” Its plans “were not adequately stress tested [ … ] even as the time available to prepare driver diagrams was reduced”. It made insufficient contingency to cope with problems as they emerged as a consequence of the timetable re-write.\textsuperscript{78}

56. The culpability of GTR in relation to its staffing levels should be considered in the context of a £13.4 million settlement it reached with the DfT in July 2017. This was predominantly to buy out part of its future contractual performance liabilities for the

\textsuperscript{69} ORR, September 2018, para 5.67
\textsuperscript{70} ORR, September 2018, para 5.53
\textsuperscript{71} Q76
\textsuperscript{72} ORR, September 2018, para 5.72
\textsuperscript{73} ORR, September 2018, para 5.79
\textsuperscript{74} ORR, September 2018, para 5.56
\textsuperscript{75} Transport Committee, Sixth Report of Session 2016–17, The future of rail: Improving the rail passenger experience, HC 64, paras 24–31
\textsuperscript{76} ORR, September 2018, para 5.62
\textsuperscript{77} ORR, September 2018, para 5.66
\textsuperscript{78} ORR, September 2018, para 5.78
period to September 2018, on the understanding that the sum would be spent on “various measures aimed at improving services for passengers, including extra train crew.”

We discuss this further in chapter 4.

The ORR

57. The ORR’s “prior role review”, conducted separately from the broader May timetable inquiry by Ian Prosser, HM Chief Inspector of Railways, sets out five areas of regulatory responsibility that could have played in part in assuring the timetabling change or more clearly raising the alarm that a very serious problem was emerging. It suggests weaknesses in four of these.

58. Its 2013 “periodic review” (PR13) of Network Rail’s plans for rail control period 5 (CP5), 2014–19, included efficiency assumptions, with which Network Rail disagreed, in relation to Network Rail’s resources for timetable planning. The prior role review notes that the ORR “did not undertake any impact assessment of its proposals”. It should be noted that the ORR’s recently published final determination for CP6, which will start in April 2019, includes:

“[ … ] a significant funding and resource boost for its timetabling and planning functions, with the System Operator’s forecast spend almost doubling from around £145m in CP5 to over £270m in CP6 enabling this part of Network Rail to employ around 100 new staff from the current total of around 700.”

59. For several years, the ORR had been aware of the rail industry’s difficulties in producing reliable timetables within the agreed timescale of 12 weeks in advance. Following an investigation launched in February 2018, it found Network Rail to be in formal breach of its relevant obligations under the Network Code. Its preceding investigation, however, “did not identify the impending operational timetable problems in advance of 20 May.”

We asked Professor Glaister if this indicated that the ORR had failed to do its job properly. He said:

“Yes, I agree that we should have looked to ways of being sharper on enforcing those licence conditions, and in future we will. That is part of the recommendations we will be looking for, both for ourselves and in our advice to the Secretary of State about what should be done. I am not saying that one can never miss a deadline, but if one is going to miss a deadline, one has to do it in a very considered and controlled way, with good reasons and good mitigation.”

79 National Audit Office, Department for Transport: The Thameslink, Southern and Great Northern rail franchise, HC 528 Session 2017–19, January 2018
80 ORR, Prior role review, September 2018
81 ORR, Prior role review, September 2018, overview of findings, p 2
82 ‘ORR approves £35bn plans to boost Britain’s railway reliability and timetabling’, ORR press release, 31 October 2018
83 ORR, Prior role review, September 2018, overview of findings, p 2
84 ‘Rail timetable issues’, ORR (accessed 31 October 2018)
85 ORR, Prior role review, September 2018, overview of findings, p 2
86 Q570
60. In its ongoing monitoring of Network Rail’s infrastructure projects, the prior role review found the ORR had identified risks but there was “a lack of clarity over whether these risks were communicated effectively and to whom.” More broadly, the ORR had not sufficiently considered May 2018 in the context of its responsibility to protect the performance of the whole railway network. The ORR board, for example, had “never held a substantive discussion on Thameslink and the largest timetable change in many years.” We found this extraordinary and put it to Professor Glaister that it indicated the ORR was unfit for purpose. He accepted that:

“I think there are many ways in which we could improve what we do. It will be part of our own second stage to think about what we can do differently; it will also of course be part of the Department’s own longer-term view, with Mr Williams, to see whether that is the case.

In longer-term changes, which will involve legislation, the logic will be that the Government of the day will need to decide what they want to do about changing the structure. Then they will have to think about what regulatory structure is appropriate for that, which may be different from what we have today.”

61. 2018 was a year in which huge investment in infrastructure was intended to unlock much needed additional capacity on the railways and produce very substantial benefits for passengers. The system has so far failed to deliver those benefits fully and in the process has demonstrated an extraordinary complacency with regard to protecting the interests of passengers. Those who suffered in the chaos that ensued have been very badly let down.

62. The May 2018 timetabling crisis was in part a consequence of the astonishing complexity of a disaggregated railway in which the interrelated private train companies operating on publicly-owned and managed infrastructure have competing commercial interests. In a fragmented, over-complicated system, with competing contractual interests, only the Secretary of State had the ultimate authority to judge the inevitable trade-offs and halt the implementation in good time but at no point was he given all the information he needed to make that decision. The case for a genuinely “root and branch” review, in which a broad range of options for reform are considered, is undeniable, but rail passengers cannot wait for the Williams Review to be conducted and for reforms to be implemented from 2020. The immediate priority must be establishing effective governance and decision-making structures to oversee the implementation of the planned timetable change in December 2018 and the two scheduled for 2019.

63. Evidence to our inquiry, and the Office of Rail and Road’s (ORR) September 2018 report, clearly demonstrates that the May 2018 timetable change was a collective, system-wide failure, across the publicly-owned infrastructure owner and manager, Network Rail, privately-owned train operating companies, Arriva Rail North and Govia Thameslink Railway, the Department for Transport and the ORR itself. The governance and decision-making structures were fundamentally flawed. Network Rail
System Operator could and should have more clearly identified systemic risks and spoken up with more force earlier in the process. Network Rail's infrastructure project teams and the train operating companies were guilty of an indefensible optimism bias. We would have expected the then Chief Executive of Network Rail to have been aware of emerging risks and, on that basis, to have taken action to address them. The governance and decision-making structures overseen by the Secretary of State and the Department of Transport were inadequate: lines of accountability failed; were not sufficiently clear; or simply did not exist. The Secretary of State for Transport is responsible for the structure of the system that controls and runs our railways. He is at the apex of this system. Some of the problems caused by timetabling changes arose from the structure of the railways. It is therefore not reasonable for the Secretary of State to absolve himself of all responsibility. We acknowledge that the Secretary of State was not fully informed of serious problems, but he should have been more proactive. The Office of Rail and Road missed chances to sound the alarm; a more confident, independent and effective Regulator may have been able to avert the crisis.

64. We are confident that Professor Glaister and his team have, so far as is possible in the time available, thoroughly and fairly established the facts, shedding light on why the system failed to deliver the May 2018 timetable, and why opportunities to raise the alarm in autumn 2017 or earlier, and prevent the crisis, were missed. We endorse the ORR’s finding that “no one took charge”; this is extraordinary and totally unacceptable. It is incumbent on all parties to accept in full the ORR’s, and our, findings and work together quickly to learn the lessons and restore trust in the industry. They must not continue to pass the buck.

**What happens next?**

**A more cautious approach and putting “someone in charge”**

65. On 9 July, Network Rail and the RDG announced, with the agreement of the DfT, that the timetable change planned for December 2018 would be substantially scaled back. Several operators, including all of GTR’s services, Northern and TPE, will continue to introduce and implement their May 2018 timetables.
Table 1: December 2018 timetable change

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Operators introducing a new December Timetable</th>
<th>Operators continuing with the planned May Timetable</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arriva Trains Wales</td>
<td>CrossCountry</td>
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<tr>
<td>C2c</td>
<td>Govia Thameslink Railway</td>
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<tr>
<td>Caledonian Sleeper</td>
<td>Great Western Railway</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chiltern Railways</td>
<td>London Overground</td>
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<tr>
<td>East Midlands Trains</td>
<td>Northern</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grand Central</td>
<td>South Western Railway</td>
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<td>Greater Anglia</td>
<td>TransPennine Express</td>
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<td>Heathrow Express</td>
<td>West Midlands Trains</td>
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<td>Hull Trains</td>
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<td>London North Eastern Railway</td>
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<td>South Eastern</td>
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<td>Tfl Rail</td>
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<td>Virgin Trains West Coast</td>
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</table>

Source: RDG, 9 July 2018

According to Network Rail and RDG, the anticipated effect is that the total size of the national rail timetable change in December would be “of a similar scale to the smaller changes of recent years.”

The Secretary of State told us:

“The December timetable change is smaller than the routine ones that normally happen every six months, to make sure that we do not have the same issues in December. Next May, there is a plan to step up the Thameslink programme. We will need to make absolutely certain that the industry is ready for that.”

On 13 October, The Times reported that Andrew Haines, who took over from Mark Carne as Chief Executive of Network Rail from August this year, was “very keen not to commit” to further timetable changes until he could be sure they will work. The suggestion in the article was that the already scaled down changes scheduled for this December may be delayed until the end of 2019.

We were obviously keen to know what governance changes had been made to the national timetabling process ahead of December 2018 and who would have the ultimate say over whether and when they go ahead. Mr Grayling said:

“I am very clear that in the short term it will sit on Andrew Haines’s desk. Indeed, I met Andrew earlier today to talk about December. Andrew is the person I trust to take a lead on this. He is a new appointment, and I think he is very good. I trust his judgment.”

91 “Rail industry focuses on reliability for December’s new timetable”, RDG press release, 9 July 2018
92 Q464
93 “Rail boss set to delay new timetables”, The Times, 13 October 2018 [subscription required]
94 Q467
68. In relation to structural governance changes, Peter Wilkinson told us:

“This time around, we have put in place what is called a programme management office—a PMO—charged with looking at the total system risk. It looks at the interactions between different timetables, the bids for different timetables from different operators and the way they work together. As you will certainly understand, in a very tightly wound railway system, which is what we have today, with very many more trains on it and running much closer together at higher speeds and carrying many more people, the margin for absorbing any programme error is very much reduced. You have to focus on where the interactions and interdependencies are.”

Mr Wilkinson and Ruth Hannant confirmed that the new PMO was located within Network Rail but included “people from the [train] operators” and would be “bolstered by independent challenge”. Ms Hannant insisted it was “not just the industry marking its own homework”.

69. Delivering the capacity and passenger benefits of investment in rail infrastructure is crucial but must always take proper account of the risks to operations from the implementation of requisite timetable changes. Given the chaos that followed May 2018, we endorse the more cautious approach—announced by the industry in July—to the changes planned for December 2018. More substantial changes currently planned for 2019 should only go ahead when the industry is confident they can be delivered effectively. The integrity of the system and passengers’ needs for reliable services must ultimately take precedence over any political and commercial interests in delivering additional capacity quickly. The Secretary of State is responsible for putting in place suitable governance and decision-making structures for the rail industry. A key lesson of the timetabling crisis is that an independent system operator needs to take charge. We are content, in the short term, for that person to be the Chief Executive of Network Rail, but if he is to assume responsibility the Secretary of State must make clear the extent of Mr Haines’ decision-making power over whether and when the next timetable change goes ahead.

70. The governance and decision-making structures in place for the May 2018 national rail timetabling change were not fit for purpose. They would not have been used for any major project in any sector anywhere in the world. We offer a cautious welcome to the establishment of a Project Management Office (PMO), located within Network Rail, including train operating company representatives and open to independent expert challenge. It is not yet clear, however, how well equipped the PMO will be to manage systemic risk and balance the competing interests of commercial operators to ensure that network integrity comes before these interests. It remains to be seen whether it can be more effective than Network Rail’s existing System Operator function in this regard. We await the ORR’s final recommendations, but our clear view is that the national rail timetabling process requires genuinely independent oversight, following accepted principles of professional project management, including the appointment of an independent Project Sponsor or Senior Responsible Owner for the whole national timetabling project. We believe this role would need to be located outside of Network Rail, so that it is more effectively insulated from commercial and political pressures.
3 Contingencies to assist disabled passengers

71. Many, perhaps a fifth, of rail passengers experienced extreme inconvenience and costly, stressful and sometimes dangerous disruption to their daily lives in the wake of 20 May. For disabled passengers within that group, we heard that using parts of the railway became simply “impossible”.

As noted in chapter 2, the ORR found that Northern, despite its awareness of the likely disruptive effects of the 20 May timetable, did not put in place any additional support for disabled passengers. While GTR put “positive and welcome” measures in place for disabled passengers who had booked assistance, those passengers would have been disproportionately affected by the general problem of totally inadequate information at the height of the crisis. Below we describe some of the effects and consider how to avoid a repeat of this unacceptable situation.

The experience of disabled passengers

72. Passengers described the difficulties faced by people with a range of disabilities and mobility issues. St Albans Commuter and Passenger Action Group, for example, told us:

“Many reported that they couldn’t even get to the priority seating area to ask for a seat, such was the overcrowding. A profoundly deaf passenger couldn’t hear changes in information and found staff to be unhelpful. A number of passengers messaged us privately about mental health conditions, and the fact that the stress of delays/cancellations, overcrowding and poor information had triggered anxiety symptoms and/or panic attacks.”

73. Stephen Brookes MBE, a disabled rail user and campaigner from Blackpool, who is the Minister for Disabled People’s “Rail Sector Champion”, described an “impossible” and “unpleasant” experience, particularly where there were very late cancellations and platform changes. He described the situation on the railways in the north in the weeks after 20 May as like “Dante’s Inferno”.

74. Doug Paulley, a disabled rail user from Yorkshire, described the process of booking assistance during the disruption as “tortuous and unreliable”. He claimed that train companies “do not comply with the obligation to contact passengers to re-plan assistance when disruption occurs.” Mr Paulley said that, in effect, this meant that “during disruption, provision for access needs often goes out the window.” When disruption occurred, train journeys were therefore “disproportionately problematic and stressful for disabled people.” Mr Brookes confirmed in oral evidence that disabled passenger assistance schemes “failed entirely” after 20 May:

97 Q377 [Stephen Brookes]
98 ORR, September 2018, summary of findings, para 91
99 ORR, September 2018, summary of findings, para 119
100 St Albans Commuter and Passenger Action Group (RTC0096)
101 Q377
102 Mr Doug Paulley (RTC0081)
“People were booking journeys but the trains were not there to connect. Of course, once the first train has missed, every other train progressively fails to communicate and interlink. People were left with no option but not to travel.”

75. When we put it to the Secretary of State that urgent action was required to ensure disabled passengers could use the railway with a greater level of confidence, including during periods of disruption, Mr Grayling initially focused on the broader issue of accessibility. He acknowledged that “disruption or no disruption, the rail system is not yet fit for purpose for disabled people.” He emphasised the importance of accessible rolling stock and improved electronic signage at stations.

76. On the narrower point at issue, assistance for disabled passengers during periods of disruption, Ruth Hannant emphasised that train companies operated on the railway network under specific licence conditions, which included having polices and processes to protect disabled people. These are known as Disabled People’s Protection Policies (DPPPs). Section C9 of the DfT’s 2009 Guidance to train operating companies on producing effective DPPPs, states:

“Where disruption does occur, it is expected that operators will do everything possible to ensure that, wherever possible, disabled passengers are able to continue their journey and are not left stranded. Operators must provide details of relevant policies and operational arrangements for meeting the needs of disabled passengers when dealing with the breakdown of facilities and services that can affect access to passenger trains and stations. This should include providing details of the operator’s policy with regard to assisting disabled people in making connections when trains are re-platformed at short notice, as well as information on policies and procedures relating to the provision of accessible substitute transport.”

Ms Hannant noted that DPPPs were now regulated by the ORR, which was currently “actively looking at” whether the rail industry was “doing its best at meeting those requirements.”

**More stringent obligations and enforcement**

77. Professor Glaister told us that the ORR’s timetabling inquiry had looked specifically at the experience of disabled people and confirmed they had been disproportionately disadvantaged on 20 May and the weeks that followed. He emphasised, however, that it had been a “mixed story”:

“Given that frontline staff were put in a very difficult position, there were some good examples of them using their initiative to execute their obligation to make best endeavours to get people home, ordering taxis, and so on. It was not universally a bad experience.”
Stephen Brookes acknowledged that station staff had often “tried their best” in very difficult circumstances.\textsuperscript{108}

78. Professor Glaister confirmed the ORR would shortly launch a consultation, which Mr Brookes had helped develop, on proposed improvements to the 2009 Guidance on DPPPs:

“It is about giving better information on what is available and better training for station staff to make sure that what is supposed to happen happens on the day. It is about making systems more sympathetic to the various kinds of disability that we see on the system.”\textsuperscript{109}

Dan Brown said the consultation would propose “significant strengthening of the regime”.\textsuperscript{110} The consultation was launched on 14 November and will run until 18 January 2019. It includes proposals to: increase the reliability of assistance for disabled rail passengers; improve accessible journey planning; reduce the notice period required for booked assistance; provide compensation where passengers do not receive the assistance they have booked; provide better information on what disabled passengers should expect from assisted travel schemes, including when things go wrong; and strengthen train operator and station staff training, including in respect of “hidden disabilities”, with mandatory refresher courses at least every two years.\textsuperscript{111}

79. We asked Mr Brown what powers the ORR had to enforce the DPPP regime. He confirmed that:

“We have the ability to fine any rail company up to 10% of its turnover [ … ]. Clearly, we have a process of escalating our intervention before we reach the point of fining. Typically, before that point, we work actively with the company to support it in making changes to its policies and approaches, because that is clearly a much more productive outcome for passengers and the rail industry.”\textsuperscript{112}

80. In a follow up written submission, Dan Brown acknowledged that the evidence “demonstrated that passengers who are disabled have not received the service that they deserve in the past”. The ORR had therefore “significantly increased its activity in this area”. It emphasised that responsibility for oversight of DPPPs had transferred from the DfT to the ORR in October 2013. One of the Regulator’s first actions on assuming responsibility had been to establish a systematic approach to data collection, in which it could “capture the [disabled] passenger experience through ongoing research into satisfaction with booked assistance”. This formed a distinct element of the ORR’s consumer-focused regulatory work, the results of which, broken down by train operator, were published annually. The ORR had not used its power to fine in this area of its regulatory responsibilities, but Mr
Brown emphasised that: “Putting such information into the public domain in a systematic way creates a clear reputational incentive for companies to deliver better customer service.”

81. All passengers affected by the 20 May timetabling disruption have been badly let down by the system, but people with sensory, mobility and other impairments were disproportionately affected. This is clearly unacceptable. As a matter of urgency, the industry and the Office of Rail and Road must take steps to ensure such a situation does not arise again. Putting in place adequate contingency plans to assist disabled people if timetable changes do not go plan must now be a central part of train operating companies’ timetable planning processes. We recommend the Office of Rail and Road take a proactive approach to ensuring such plans are in place and, in response to this Report, it should set out how it intends to do so.

82. We welcome the Office of Rail and Road’s renewed focus on the adequacy of train operating companies Disabled Persons’ Protection Policies (DPPPs) and support its intention to consult and then strengthen the regime. Northern Rail’s failure to put in place additional assistance, despite being fully aware ahead of 20 May of the very high risks of severe disruption, clearly demonstrates the weakness of the current approach. Our judgement is that the ORR can no longer rely solely on the publication of data, and the reputational effects on train operating companies’ behaviour, to ensure compliance and the provision of assistance that disabled rail users need and deserve. The Regulator must prove its effectiveness in this policy area, including by acting swiftly to implement the outcome of its DPPP consultation and stepping up its enforcement activity, including using its powers to levy fines on train operating companies.

113 Letter dated 2 November 2018 from Dan Brown, Director, Policy and Strategy, ORR to Chair of the Transport Committee
4 Fairer compensation schemes

Calls for a fares freeze

83. Regulated rail fares, which include tickets on commuter routes, are linked to the Retail Price Index (RPI) measure of inflation, in a system that has been in place since 2004.\textsuperscript{114} The next annual rise, due to be announced shortly, will be in January 2019 and capped to July 2018’s RPI figure of 3.2%.\textsuperscript{115} The table below shows what a maximum fare rise would mean for a selection of standard annual season ticket prices on routes badly affected by the May timetabling disruption:

Table 2: Maximum fare increases in 2019 based on RPI inflation, July 2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Train operator</th>
<th>Route</th>
<th>2018 price</th>
<th>3.2% increase =</th>
<th>2019 price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Great Northern</td>
<td>Royston to London</td>
<td>£4,784</td>
<td>£153</td>
<td>£4,937</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thameslink</td>
<td>Harpenden</td>
<td>£3,820</td>
<td>£122</td>
<td>£3,942</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern/TPE</td>
<td>Leeds to Manchester</td>
<td>£3,172</td>
<td>£102</td>
<td>£3,274</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Published TOC fares and National Rail Enquires (accessed 5 November 2018)

84. Given the immense difficulties faced by passengers in the wake of this year’s timetabling crisis, there have understandably been calls for regulated fares to be frozen for 2019. Anthony Smith of Transport Focus believed it was the very least the worst-affected passengers on GTR, Northern and TPE, deserved:

“... That is a minimum, just to show some recognition that things went wrong and that they are sorry and trying to put it right. It may be a gesture, but it would be an important one in winning back trust and winning people back to the railway.”\textsuperscript{116}

85. The Secretary of State, however, argued that a fares freeze would likely be counterproductive within the current system. As fares are linked to the rate of inflation, a freeze in 2019 would have a compound effect in future years, while train operators’ costs continue to rise. This could inhibit investment, further degrading services, and would likely increase taxpayers’ subsidies of the railway. Mr Grayling said:

“We have looked very carefully at the implications of freezing fares. [ … ] The problem with a fares freeze is that if your costs continue to go up every year, and you continue to pay more to your staff, you build a long-term and growing underlying problem within your own finances. Over a period of time, you are sucking a cumulatively larger and larger amount out of the...

\textsuperscript{114} Railways: fares statistics, House of Commons Library briefing paper SN06384, June 2018
\textsuperscript{115} See “Season tickets: 2019 annual rail fares could be more than £100 higher”, BBC News, 15 August 2018
\textsuperscript{116} Q419
money available to run the network. The only way of counteracting that is that people who do not travel on the railways have to pay more and more taxes to provide a counterbalance.”

86. We wanted to know how it could be fair for GTR’s passengers, in particular, to shoulder the burden of a fares rise next year when the company had been found to be particularly culpable in the timetabling problems. GTR had also in effect bought out elements of its financial performance penalties for the period covering the height of the crisis, as noted in chapter 2. We put it to DfT witnesses that it would appear to passengers that GTR was effectively “getting off scot-free”.

87. The Secretary of State rejected this suggestion and insisted the DfT still had “plenty” of contractual levers to use against the operator. He denied the Department had given GTR “carte blanche to under-perform”. While a fares freeze on GTR would be counter-productive for the reasons discussed above, he was “looking very carefully at what we are going to do about GTR and their poor performance this summer.” He suggested options included “alternatives for making sure that passengers feel the benefit of any consequences that GTR face.” He could not, however, reveal any details before a decision had been made, which he suggested would be “within a small number of weeks.”

88. We understand and sympathise with calls for, at the very least, a freeze of regulated fares in 2019 for Thameslink, Great Northern, Northern and TransPennine Express passengers. They do not deserve to see their fares increase in line with July’s Retail Price Index measure of inflation of 3.2%. Ultimately the level of fares increase up to this cap will be a matter of commercial and political will, but we accept the practical difficulties of applying a fares freeze within the current annual, inflation-linked system. However, around a fifth of rail passengers have suffered appalling services and been very badly let down by the whole system; a fares increase in these circumstances would confirm that the current fares system is broken. Establishing a clear link between passengers’ daily experiences of using the railway and the fares they pay must be a first order priority for the Williams Rail Review. We urge the industry and Government to consider all options to keep any regulated fares increase in 2019 to a minimum, particularly on parts of the network worst affected by the timetabling crisis. We further recommended that 2018 Northern, TransPennine Express, Thameslink and Great Northern season ticket holders receive a discount, equivalent to any increase announced in December 2018, on renewed season tickets in 2019.

**Delay Repay and the additional compensation schemes**

**Delay Repay**

89. Mr Grayling believed the right approach was to focus on compensating passengers for the disruption they had experienced. He told us that, rather than reduce or freeze fares next year:

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117  Q452
118  OS15
119  Q455
120  Q458
121  OS16
“We judged that the important thing was to get compensation to those passengers quickly. If you look at the package that has been provided to those affected, a month’s free travel plus [the standard compensation scheme] Delay Repay is almost the equivalent of 10% of their annual travel. Our judgment was that, to make sure that those passengers were properly compensated for what had happened, it was a quicker and more straightforward way of making sure they received that compensation now as opposed to later.”

90. Most passenger train operators, including GTR, Northern and TPE, provide Delay Repay passenger compensation schemes, which offer up to 100% reimbursement of the relevant ticket depending on the length of the delay to a service. In almost all Delay Repay schemes, 50% of the single ticket value can be reimbursed for delays of at least 30 minutes, rising to 100% for delays of an hour or more. Delays of two hours or more can attract 100% reimbursement of the return ticket value.

91. In October 2016, in recognition of prolonged disruption to Southern services, the DfT announced that GTR would be the first operator to introduce Delay Repay 15 (DR15), in which, in addition to the compensation for delays of up to 30, 60 and 120 minutes, 25% compensation is payable for delays of between 15 and 29 minutes. The DfT’s intention is to introduce DR15 across all operators as commercial franchises are re-let or directly awarded. On 13 September 2018, the DfT announced that Northern would move to DR15 in December 2018, in recognition of the effects of the timetabling crisis.

92. There was widespread concern about the adequacy and fairness of Delay Repay compensation schemes. Passenger and consumer groups objected to:

- the level of compensation available;
- the onus the schemes place on passengers to make a claim for each individual delayed service;
- complex and often lengthy claim processes; and
- a lack of advertising of the schemes and consequently low awareness amongst passengers of their compensation rights.

93. In a report that considered the dire service experienced by Southern passengers in 2016, our predecessor Committee concluded that:

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122 Q446
125 “Compensation boost for northern passengers as ‘delay repay’ is extended”, DfT press release, 13 September 2018
126 See, for example, Meldreth, Shepreth and Foxton Community Rail Partnership and Rail User Group (RTC0068); Miss J Baron (RTC0075); St Albans Commuter and Passenger Action Group (RTC0096); Which? (RTC0077)
Rail timetable changes: May 2018

“Given the scale and prolonged nature of disruption on parts of [GTR’s] franchise, it is unacceptable that a standard Delay Repay scheme, in which the onus is on the passenger to make individual claims each time they are delayed, continues to apply.”

94. On 1 October 2018, the DfT published research that shows significant improvements since 2016 in passenger satisfaction with DR schemes, including the ease with which they found information about the schemes, the method and value of compensation payments and the speed with which compensation payments are made. The research shows, however, that only 35% of all passengers who were eligible for DR made a claim. This is an increase of 4% in two years.

**Additional compensation schemes**

95. Northern, TPE, Thameslink and Great Northern announced specific compensation packages, over and above their standard DR schemes, for passengers affected by the timetabling chaos. The additional schemes offered compensation of either the full cost of one week’s or four weeks’/one months’ travel, depending on the type of ticket held and level of disruption to services at particular stations.

96. The eligibility criteria are complex. The DfT explained that the level of compensation for GTR customers was based on the percentage of total rail services provided by Thameslink or Great Northern at particular stations. Where this was 50% or more, passengers were entitled to claim the higher, one month/four-week reimbursement. Where the figure was between 25% and 49% of total services, compensation was limited to one week’s travel costs.

97. The Department did not offer a similar explanation of how the different levels of entitlement were arrived at for Northern and TPE passengers. Northern’s website states that “Level 1” (four weeks/one month) compensation was available to passengers affected by a combination of overrunning infrastructure works and implementation of the 20 May timetable change. If affected only by 20 May implementation, passengers’ entitlement was restricted to “Level 2” (one week).

98. Northern and TPE’s additional compensation was available to passengers who held tickets for four weeks’ worth of travel between 1 April 2018 and 30 June 2018. Initially the schemes were limited to season ticket holders, but the Northern scheme was extended to other regular passengers on 24 September. On Thameslink and Great Northern, the additional compensation was initially only available to holders of weekly, monthly and annual season tickets valid between 20 May and 28 July. Following pressure from passenger groups, including the national Watchdog, Transport Focus, GTR announced in

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128 DfT, *Rail Delays and Compensation 2018*, October 2018
129 See ‘Additional Compensation Scheme FAQs’, Northern (accessed 6 November 2018); ‘Additional Industry compensation scheme’, Thameslink Great Northern (accessed 6 November 2018)
130 DfT (RTC0084)
131 ‘Additional Compensation Scheme FAQs’, Northern (accessed 6 November 2018)
132 ‘Northern to launch extended compensation scheme for regular travellers’, Transport for the North (accessed 6 November 2018)
August that the additional compensation would also be available to those who held daily or carnet tickets (books of single tickets for use over a specific period) for at least three days travel in any week in the relevant period.\footnote{GTR extends industry compensation scheme to non-season ticket holders on Thameslink and Great Northern\textsuperscript{,} GTR press release, 28 August 2018}

99. We asked passengers whether they thought the additional compensation schemes were fair, timely and adequate. Emily Ketchin, who gave oral evidence on 5 September, believed they were “absolutely not”. She noted she was still awaiting an email from Thameslink, which would be the signal that she could make a claim. Thameslink and Great Northern have since confirmed that they have completed “phase 1” of the additional compensation process, by emailing “63,000 eligible season ticket holders who we had identified from sales records.” In “phase 2”, season ticket holders who were not contacted by email were invited to claim between 25 September and 30 November. Thameslink/Great Northern intended to begin “phase 3” of the process, opening the scheme to claims from non-season ticket holders, by 30 November.\footnote{‘Additional Industry compensation scheme’, Thameslink/Great Northern (accessed 6 November 2018)} This is more than six months after 20 May.

100. Some passengers were scathing about the additional compensation schemes. St Albans Commuter and Passenger Action Group, for example, described GTR’s scheme as “an insult”, which did not accurately reflect “the damages suffered”. The St Alban’s group and others emphasised that the schemes were limited to a period shorter than the total period of disruption; did not compensate passengers for additional costs; and did not adequately reflect the “human impact”.\footnote{St Albans Commuter and Passenger Action Group (RTC0096)} Emily Ketchin told us: “Obviously, refunds are welcome, but they do not compensate for the time, stress, missed appointments and missed family time […]”.\footnote{Q410} She also understood that GTR’s additional compensation was payable to season ticket holders against the 15 July interim timetable. She felt this was “vastly unfair” because many season ticket holders would have purchased their tickets earlier in the year on the basis of the service that had intended to be delivered from 20 May.\footnote{Q413}

101. Stephen Brookes told us the schemes had been “negatively received” by many disabled people and emphasised that they were particularly difficult for people with “learning disabilities and basic communication problems” to understand and navigate. He had heard anecdotally that people in this situation had decided “not to bother” applying.\footnote{Q410}

**Moving towards automatic or automated compensation**

102. Alex Hayman of the consumer group Which? believed that the events of this summer had:

“[ … ] highlighted something we have been trying to get public for a very long time. The compensation landscape is totally unfit for purpose, and so many barriers are created for people to receive the money that they are owed. [ … ] At the heart of it, understanding of the compensation system among passengers is very low, and that is because it is incredibly complex and not consistent [ … ]. After suffering from delays and cancellations [ … ] the last thing you want to do when you get home [ … ] is to spend
that time filling in forms. There is a massive burden of responsibility for the passenger to remember the train that you meant to take, even though during the chaos they were always changing and you were running between platforms, and that is incredibly difficult.”

103. There have been recent attempts to legislate, via Private Members’ Bills, for fairer, consistent and automatic compensation schemes, in which digital technology eliminates the need for passengers to make claims, across the whole railway network. For example, Huw Merriman MP, a member of our Committee, has introduced a Bill that would require train operating companies to ring-fence for these purposes a proportion of the compensation they receive for delays caused by Network Rail’s infrastructure works. All ring-fenced monies would be invested in technology which would allow passengers to tap on and off the train. The Bill would then require train operating companies to use this technology to automatically monitor for compensation entitlement and pay directly to passengers’ bank accounts when due (without the need for the passenger to apply). This Bill has been co-signed by many members of our Committee.

104. On 1 October 2018, the Secretary of State announced that rail passengers would benefit from “simple, ‘one-click’ automated claims systems, available via smartphones and smartcard registration.” The DfT has previously pledged to work with the industry to ensure “every passenger will have the choice of travelling without a paper ticket by the end of 2018” and pilot smart phone barcode ticketing. The new automated claims systems would “form part of stronger obligations for future train operators under UK government-awarded franchises, ensuring that passengers are more aware than ever of their right to compensation.”

105. Mr Grayling said that, as the industry moved towards implementation of smart ticketing options, the Department would “move rapidly” towards “simple one-click systems for compensation.” Given that the new obligations were explicitly to be applied to “future operators” within the franchising system, we were concerned that rapid process was likely to be impeded by the DfT’s franchising schedule. According to the current schedule the last existing franchise will not be re-let until 2029.

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139 Q414
141 'Rail passengers to benefit from ‘one-click’ compensation', DfT press release, 1 October 2018
142 'Government plans £80 million smart ticketing rail revolution', DfT press release, 5 October 2017
143 'Rail passengers to benefit from ‘one-click’ compensation', DfT press release, 1 October 2018
144 Q542
145 DfT, Rail Franchise Schedule (accessed 16 November 2018)
106. Mr Grayling said the Department would “push that forward as rapidly as we can with the contracting structures we have” but confirmed that automated compensation enabled by smart ticketing would have to be a new obligation in franchises as they come up for renewal or renegotiated into existing franchise terms. Peter Wilkinson told us:

“Moving people on to smart [ticketing] allows us to know that they are on the train; who they are; and something about their account details so that we can make the process of returning money to them much simpler. We can make those changes in the life of franchises. We do not have to wait for franchise competitions, but there is a process to go through. Taxpayers’ interests matter as well. There is a business case to be made around that kind of investment, so we have to make sure that the costs and revenues are fair and in the interest of taxpayers as well as fare payers.”

107. We acknowledge that the Government acted reasonably quickly to ensure train operating companies put in place additional compensation schemes over and above existing Delay Repay arrangements. We do not, however, accept the Secretary of State’s assertion that the additional schemes have ensured passengers were compensated straightforwardly and quickly. The schemes have complicated eligibility rules and place the onus on passengers to make a claim through relatively complex processes. Non-season ticket holders were not able to apply to Thameslink’s and Great Northern’s schemes until 30 November, more than six months after 20 May.

108. While it may be the case that it would be theoretically possible for the worst-affected passengers to claim around 10% of the cost of their annual season ticket, this would require them to navigate the additional compensation scheme and make individual claims for each delayed service. In the chaos of this summer, when at points it was not clear that significant portions of the railway were operating to any timetable at all, this would have been virtually impossible. Even if passengers were able to make the claims, in many cases the level of reimbursement would be insufficient to compensate for additional costs incurred, such as for taxis and additional childcare, and unmonetised costs to working and family lives.

109. The events of this year demonstrate an overwhelming case for automated, or automatic, compensation schemes. We therefore welcome the Government’s announcement of stronger obligations on future train operating companies within the franchising system, including the provision of simple, one-click automated schemes enabled via smart card registration or smart phone apps. The key to this is successful roll out of smart ticketing technology across the network, which the Government has committed to achieve by the end of 2018. The Government must now set a measurable target for implementation of “one click” automated compensation schemes on commuter rail routes. These schemes must be written into contracts as they are re-let. Those who suffered most in the timetabling crisis should also benefit from automated compensation schemes as soon as possible. We recommend the Government ensure, through franchise renegotiations if necessary, that smart automated compensation schemes are piloted are on Govia Thameslink Railway, Northern and TransPennine Express commuter routes by the end of 2019.
5 Meaningful consultation and proper impact assessment

110. A survey conducted by the consumer group Which? on 12 and 13 June 2018 found that 65% of passengers affected by the timetabling crisis did not believe they had been adequately consulted about the May timetable changes.\(^{148}\) In this chapter, we examine train companies’ approaches to consultation ahead of May 2018, including an example of best practice, and consider how more consistent, ongoing and meaningful consultation could be key to restoring passengers’ trust in the railway. Some passengers and groups reported to us that they had been substantially disadvantaged by the May timetable change, irrespective of the implementation problems since 20 May.\(^{149}\) We examine some of these effects and consider how the impacts could be better assessed and mitigated now and in the future.

**Passenger views on the consultation process**

111. Evidence from passengers and other groups reflected the Which? survey results. Almost all who expressed a view had concerns about consultation prior to the 20 May timetable change. Consultations were described as “box-ticking” exercises;\(^{150}\) services were thought to have been “sneakily removed” from the timetable;\(^{151}\) some believed there was a “culture of secrecy” in the rail industry.\(^{152}\)

112. There were some examples of good practice. Hasting and Rother Rail Users Group (RUG), for example, reported GTR’s “positive approach to public consultation” in relation to its local train services. The operator had engaged in “direct and detailed negotiations with local RUGs over a long period”. Hastings and Rother RUG had been invited by GTR to “participate fully in designing” local services. This collaboration led to a fourth hourly service being introduced without the need for additional rolling stock (an idea devised by the local RUG during the negotiations). Despite some implementation and performance problems since 20 May, the overall experience had been positive. GTR was “now holding regular review meetings with the RUGs, providing a positive forum to address current problems and plan for the December timetable.”\(^{153}\)

113. Anthony Smith from the national passenger Watchdog, Transport Focus, told us that, while Northern’s and TPE’s consultations were “a bit old school” and “perfunctory”, GTR’s initial consultation on the changes planned for May 2018 was “quite good” and “quite extensive”. He confirmed that GTR had “made considerable efforts to go and talk to rail user groups and stakeholder groups.”\(^{154}\)

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148 Which? submission to ORR timetabling inquiry
149 See, for example, Harpenden Thameslink Commuters’ Group (RTC0047); Paul Blomfield MP (RTC0098)
150 Geoff Robinson (RTC0040); Mr Andrew Johnson (RTC0090); APTU (The Association of Public Transport Users) (RTC0059)
151 Mr Andrew Johnson (RTC0090)
152 Nick Winfield (RTC0037); Which? (RTC0077); Paul Gloess (RTC0076); John Rushton (RTC0065); St Albans City & District Council (RTC0056); Councillor Emma Hoddinott (RTC0052)
153 Hastings & Rother Rail Users Alliance (RTC0063)
154 Q393
Alex Hayman of Which? called for much better and more consistently applied approach to consultation across all passenger operators on the network. His view was that effective passenger consultation was an ongoing process and should not only be undertaken in the run up to major changes such as this May’s timetable change. He believed the railway could learn much from other sectors, and that rail passengers ought to be given increased opportunities to “challenge train companies”. He noted the example of “customer challenge groups (CCGs)” in the water sector, in which companies were obliged to “engage in a meaningful way with CCGs” about proposed price rises.\footnote{Q395}

**Late changes before May 2018 and waiving the obligation to consult**

Anthony Smith noted that much of passengers’ dissatisfaction had arisen after consultation on the May timetable had been completed. This was in part because GTR was “trying to mesh with what East Midlands Trains was trying to do, and nobody took an overall view; hence the mess we ended up in.”\footnote{Q393}

This came through very strongly in evidence from passengers. For example, Emily Ketchin of Harpenden Thameslink Commuters’ Group told us that GTR’s consultation on the changes, undertaken in 2017, had included “more services at Harpenden”, totalling “eight fast and four slow services—12 services an hour.” Changes made to the plan since then meant that what was delivered from 20 May was “a far cry” from what had been consulted on. The Harpenden group wrote:

“In the morning, under the full May 2018 timetable, key Harpenden services are cut by one third [ … ]. In numerical terms there is a reduction from 23 trains to 18 and from 212 carriages to 176 for all services—and a reduction from 19 to 12 in the key faster services. [ … ] On Saturdays services have been cut by 75% versus the pre-May timetable (2 trains an hour from 8)—with direct services to many stations removed altogether.”\footnote{RTC0047}

The Harpenden Group’s, and other witnesses’, understanding of why Thameslink services were cut by the May timetable change was:

“[ … ] the introduction of ‘Thameslink Express’ services, which stop only at Bedford, Luton, St. Albans and London stations. These were introduced to mitigate complaints of Bedford commuters when EMT [East Midlands Trains] services were stopped from calling at Bedford during peak. There is no evidence that the consequential impact on Harpenden, Luton Airport Parkway, Leagrave, Harlington or Flitwick of removing stops was considered.”\footnote{RTC0096}

St Albans Commuter and Passenger Action Group believed that the decision to stop Thameslink services calling at intermediate stations between Bedford and London was
“made to satisfy the DfT’s insistence of a journey time of 47 minutes from Bedford to London […] following the removal of EMT services stopping at Bedford in the morning and evening peaks.”

118. Harpenden Thameslink Commuters’ Group’s submission set out some of the effects of the service reductions on people’s daily routines, including having to leave home for work earlier in the morning and getting home later in the evening to the detriment of family life. For example, one commuter, writing in mid-August, told us:

“Since 20th May I have been home and had dinner with my family probably twice. Not twice per week. Twice in total. At work I have to make excuses as to why I can’t work late as I fear beyond 8pm the trains will be non-existent. What is harder to measure is the stress on me and my family due to all of this.”

Emily Ketchin described the experience of Harpenden commuters:

“What is happening is that we are standing there on very crowded platforms […] We are standing on platforms where those trains are whizzing past. We can see that they are lightly loaded, so the full capacity of the railway is not being properly used. […] as a result of the Thameslink Express trains being introduced, we have fewer train services at Leagrave, Harlington, Flitwick, Luton Airport Parkway and Harpenden. That is 10.5 million passengers per year. That is not, on any view, a small minority.”

119. Ms Ketchin argued there was “a viable alternative”:

“The Thameslink Express trains should have a different stopping pattern that better matches passenger needs. Instead of five, five, zero, it should have been three Luton, three Harpenden and four St Albans. It is disingenuous to suggest that there was no other viable option. […]”

120. The Harpenden group noted remarks by the then rail Minister, Jo Johnson MP, in a debate on Thameslink upgrades in the House of Commons on 18 April 2018. In answer to points about the lack of consultation on late changes to the May plan, Mr Johnson confirmed that ongoing upgrades to the Midland Mainline, including a fourth track from Bedford to Kettering, meant that “some difficult decisions have had to be taken”, including fast Thameslink services no longer stopping at Harpenden [and the other intermediate stations]. He said, “the impact of the midland main line works only became apparent to us in November 2017”, meaning “a specific consultation for Harpenden passengers was simply not a viable option.”

121. Passengers and representative groups felt understandably aggrieved by this. The Association of Public Transport Users noted “there was too much uncertainty at the time of the consultations” and that the timetabling process as a whole failed to allow sufficient time to consult on what was actually delivered on 20 May. Witnesses pointed to train

159 St Albans Commuter and Passenger Action Group (RTC0096)
160 St Albans Commuter and Passenger Action Group (RTC0096)
161 Q384
162 Q392
163 HC Deb, 18 April 2018, col 437
164 Association of Public Transport Users (RTC0059)
operating companies’ obligation to consult on all “significant alterations” to services, as set out, for example, in section 4.1 of GTR’s franchise agreement. Harpenden Thameslink Commuters’ Group believed this was clearly intended to be an “absolute” obligation, and that the DfT had set a “dangerous precedent” in waiving it.

122. Paul Blomfield MP raised similar concerns about an apparent lack of consultation about cuts to EMT services from London St Pancras to Sheffield, noting that the five pre-20 May late afternoon/early evening services had been reduced to three on 20 May. EMT’s information to passengers about the 20 May timetable change did not appear specifically to mention the reduction in London/Sheffield services, merely making a general announcement that “in order for GTR to increase the number of services on our shared lines into London, we have had to make changes to our timetable.”

123. Hitchin Rail Commuters Group and Hitchin Rail Users Group reported that GTR had consulted in 2017 on Great Northern service improvements at Hitchin, including more fast services to London Kings Cross and substantial additional capacity, including an increase in morning peak trains from 22 to 24. The Hitchin groups believed that GTR’s “positive statements meant that many Hitchin rail users felt no need to take part in the consultation”. Notwithstanding the chaotic implementation of the new timetable, what the May 2018 timetable delivered did not meet Hitchin passengers’ expectations. For example, it entailed a reduction in morning and evening peak services and loss of express Hitchin to London services.

124. In relation to Thameslink service reductions at Harpenden, Luton Airport Parkway, Leagrave, Harlington and Flitwick, Ruth Hannant claimed they were an unavoidable consequence of the Thameslink phasing decision (see paragraphs 34-42 in Chapter 2). She also said GTR had:

“[ … ] acted to introduce extra services where they can. For example, in the case of Harpenden, on balance, even though there were fewer trains, they were longer trains, and in total I think they only lost four carriages in the peak, but, given the concerns that were raised, the operator is introducing two extra services via Harpenden from December. They have listened to concerns when they have been raised, but at the time, consultation on the specific operational changes, because of the issues we have been discussing, was not possible at that point.”

125. The Secretary of State said that the upgrades to the Midland Mainline had meant there were “slightly fewer services running” but would ultimately enable a more substantial timetable when the works were completed in 2020. When we asked him whether he thought the approach to consultation could be improved, he said:

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165 John Rushton (RTC0065)
166 Harpenden Thameslink Commuters’ Group (RTC0047)
167 Paul Blomfield MP (RTC0098)
168 Hitchin Rail Commuters Group & Hitchin Rail Users Group (RTC0055)
169 Q533
“I think it was very comprehensive, so I see no particular reason to do that. As far as I can see, there has been very extensive consultation. People are not always happy with the outcome of the consultation, and people are not always happy with the outcome of the decisions you have to take. When you put in place infrastructure changes, there are disruptions to passengers. […] but I do not think that the process is wrong.”

126. After the DfT’s evidence on 22 October, Emily Ketchin wrote to us on behalf of Harpenden Thameslink Commuters’ Group to take issue with several points. She pointed out, for example, that, contrary to Ruth Hannant’s evidence, the Thameslink service reductions were a consequence of the “Bedford Express” decision in late 2017. As noted above, this had been acknowledged by the then rail Minister in April this year. Ms Ketchin’s understanding was therefore that the service reductions were not related in any way to the phasing decision. She reiterated that the then rail Minister had, also during the debate in April, acknowledged that the Department waived GTR’s obligation to consult on the service reductions. Ms Ketchin objected to Mr Grayling’s reference to “slightly fewer” services running until 2020, arguing that “one third of key services” could not reasonably be described as such. She claimed that no new services had been introduced and, in fact, “current services still fail to meet even the low bar set in the May 2018 timetable.” She rebutted Ms Hannant’s claim that service reductions in the peak had been largely mitigated by longer trains with more carriages and seats, noting that the Department and GTR were using an unreasonable definition of “peak”, including trains leaving Harpenden for London up to 10am.

We invited the DfT to respond to Emily Ketchin’s rebuttals of the evidence given by ministers and officials, but the Department chose not to submit further evidence to our inquiry.

127. A key lesson from the May 2018 timetable change is that a significant proportion of rail users do not feel the industry is listening to them and taking proper account of their needs. If trust in the railway is to be restored the rail industry must substantially improve its engagement with passengers, including through ongoing and meaningful consultation on proposed service changes. Good practice, such as Govia Thameslink Railway’s active engagement with Rail User Groups on the design of some its services, exists but the broader approach to passenger consultation is patchy at best and perfunctory at worse. The Department for Transport’s rail franchising teams must more actively ensure that all passenger rail franchisees adopt best practice and innovative approaches and adhere to their contractual obligations to consult on all significant service changes.

128. Where there are major timetable changes on a complex interrelated network some highly-valued services may have to change, and some passengers may lose out. It is vital in these circumstances that passengers’ voices are heard, and effective mitigations fully explored. This does not appear to have been the case in relation to service alterations affecting East Midlands Trains, Thameslink and Great Northern passengers. Consultations on the May timetable were completed before these changes were planned. This was in part because of knock on effects of work to upgrade the Midland Mainline. Many passengers were consulted on significant service improvements; what they got were substantial reductions. In these circumstances we cannot agree with the

170 Q535
171 Letter from Emily Ketchin to the Chair of the Committee, dated 26 October; See also Harpenden Thameslink Commuters’ Group (RTC0047)
Department for Transport that the industry’s consultations on the May 2018 timetable were “very comprehensive”. Future national rail timetable changes must adhere to agreed timescales and allow sufficient time for meaningful consultation with passengers.

129. As set out earlier in this Report, the industry and Network Rail have now adopted a more cautious approach to national rail timetable change in December 2018, and possibly beyond. We recommend the Department for Transport use this period of relative stability to re-assess the effects of the May 2018 timetable change, identifying stations that have lost a significant number of services, particularly at peak times. The Department and Network Rail should work with the operators and engage with passengers to design mitigations that better meet the needs of people travelling to and from the worst-affected stations. Evidence to our inquiry suggests these will include Sheffield, Hitchin, Harpenden, Luton Airport Parkway, Leagrave, Harlington and Flitwick.
Conclusions and recommendations

Why did the system fail?

1. 2018 was a year in which huge investment in infrastructure was intended to unlock much needed additional capacity on the railways and produce very substantial benefits for passengers. The system has so far failed to deliver those benefits fully and in the process has demonstrated an extraordinary complacency with regard to protecting the interests of passengers. Those who suffered in the chaos that ensued have been very badly let down. (Paragraph 62)

2. The May 2018 timetabling crisis was in part a consequence of the astonishing complexity of a disaggregated railway in which the interrelated private train companies operating on publicly-owned and managed infrastructure have competing commercial interests. In a fragmented, over-complicated system, with competing contractual interests, only the Secretary of State had the ultimate authority to judge the inevitable trade-offs and halt the implementation in good time but at no point was he given all the information he needed to make that decision. The case for a genuinely “root and branch” review, in which a broad range of options for reform are considered, is undeniable, but rail passengers cannot wait for the Williams Review to be conducted and for reforms to be implemented from 2020. The immediate priority must be establishing effective governance and decision-making structures to oversee the implementation of the planned timetable change in December 2018 and the two scheduled for 2019. (Paragraph 63)

3. Evidence to our inquiry, and the Office of Rail and Road’s (ORR) September 2018 report, clearly demonstrates that the May 2018 timetable change was a collective, system-wide failure, across the publicly-owned infrastructure owner and manager, Network Rail, privately-owned train operating companies, Arriva Rail North and Govia Thameslink Railway, the Department for Transport and the ORR itself. The governance and decision-making structures were fundamentally flawed. Network Rail System Operator could and should have more clearly identified systemic risks and spoken up with more force earlier in the process. Network Rail’s infrastructure project teams and the train operating companies were guilty of an indefensible optimism bias. We would have expected the then Chief Executive of Network Rail to have been aware of emerging risks and, on that basis, to have taken action to address them. The governance and decision-making structures overseen by the Secretary of State and the Department of Transport were inadequate: lines of accountability failed; were not sufficiently clear; or simply did not exist. The Secretary of State for Transport is responsible for the structure of the system that controls and runs our railways. He is at the apex of this system. Some of the problems caused by timetabling changes arose from the structure of the railways. It is therefore not reasonable for the Secretary of State to absolve himself of all responsibility. We acknowledge that the Secretary of State was not fully informed of serious problems, but he should have been more proactive. The Office of Rail and Road missed chances to sound the alarm; a more confident, independent and effective Regulator may have been able to avert the crisis. (Paragraph 64)
4. We are confident that Professor Glaister and his team have, so far as is possible in the time available, thoroughly and fairly established the facts, shedding light on why the system failed to deliver the May 2018 timetable, and why opportunities to raise the alarm in autumn 2017 or earlier, and prevent the crisis, were missed. We endorse the ORR’s finding that “no one took charge”; this is extraordinary and totally unacceptable. It is incumbent on all parties to accept in full the ORR’s, and our, findings and work together quickly to learn the lessons and restore trust in the industry. They must not continue to pass the buck. (Paragraph 65)

What happens next?

5. Delivering the capacity and passenger benefits of investment in rail infrastructure is crucial but must always take proper account of the risks to operations from the implementation of requisite timetable changes. Given the chaos that followed May 2018, we endorse the more cautious approach—announced by the industry in July—to the changes planned for December 2018. More substantial changes currently planned for 2019 should only go ahead when the industry is confident they can be delivered effectively. The integrity of the system and passengers’ needs for reliable services must ultimately take precedence over any political and commercial interests in delivering additional capacity quickly. The Secretary of State is responsible for putting in place suitable governance and decision-making structures for the rail industry. A key lesson of the timetabling crisis is that an independent system operator needs to take charge. We are content, in the short term, for that person to be the Chief Executive of Network Rail, but if he is to assume responsibility the Secretary of State must make clear the extent of Mr Haines’ decision-making power over whether and when the next timetable change goes ahead. (Paragraph 70)

6. The governance and decision-making structures in place for the May 2018 national rail timetabling change were not fit for purpose. They would not have been used for any major project in any sector anywhere in the world. We offer a cautious welcome to the establishment of a Project Management Office (PMO), located within Network Rail, including train operating company representatives and open to independent expert challenge. It is not yet clear, however, how well equipped the PMO will be to manage systemic risk and balance the competing interests of commercial operators to ensure that network integrity comes before these interests. It remains to be seen whether it can be more effective than Network Rail’s existing System Operator function in this regard. We await the ORR’s final recommendations, but our clear view is that the national rail timetabling process requires genuinely independent oversight, following accepted principles of professional project management, including the appointment of an independent Project Sponsor or Senior Responsible Owner for the whole national timetabling project. We believe this role would need to be located outside of Network Rail, so that it is more effectively insulated from commercial and political pressures. (Paragraph 71)

Contingencies to assist disabled passengers

7. All passengers affected by the 20 May timetabling disruption have been badly let down by the system, but people with sensory, mobility and other impairments were disproportionately affected. This is clearly unacceptable. As a matter of urgency, the
industry and the Office of Rail and Road must take steps to ensure such a situation does not arise again. *Putting in place adequate contingency plans to assist disabled people if timetable changes do not go plan must now be a central part of train operating companies’ timetable planning processes. We recommend the Office of Rail and Road take a proactive approach to ensuring such plans are in place and, in response to this Report, it should set out how it intends to do so.* (Paragraph 82)

8. We welcome the Office of Rail and Road’s renewed focus on the adequacy of train operating companies Disabled Persons’ Protection Policies (DPPPs) and support its intention to consult and then strengthen the regime. Northern Rail’s failure to put in place additional assistance, despite being fully aware ahead of 20 May of the very high risks of severe disruption, clearly demonstrates the weakness of the current approach. Our judgement is that the ORR can no longer rely solely on the publication of data, and the reputational effects on train operating companies’ behaviour, to ensure compliance and the provision of assistance that disabled rail users need and deserve. *The Regulator must prove its effectiveness in this policy area, including by acting swiftly to implement the outcome of its DPPP consultation and stepping up its enforcement activity, including using its powers to levy fines on train operating companies.* (Paragraph 83)

**2019 Fares**

9. We understand and sympathise with calls for, at the very least, a freeze of regulated fares in 2019 for Thameslink, Great Northern, Northern and TransPennine Express passengers. They do not deserve to see their fares increase in line with July’s Retail Price Index measure of inflation of 3.2%. Ultimately the level of fares increase up to this cap will be a matter of commercial and political will, but we accept the practical difficulties of applying a fares freeze within the current annual, inflation-linked system. However, around a fifth of rail passengers have suffered appalling services and been very badly let down by the whole system; a fares increase in these circumstances would confirm that the current fares system is broken. Establishing a clear link between passengers’ daily experiences of using the railway and the fares they pay must be a first order priority for the Williams Rail Review. *We urge the industry and Government to consider all options to keep any regulated fares increase in 2019 to a minimum, particularly on parts of the network worst affected by the timetabling crisis. We further recommended that 2018 Northern, TransPennine Express, Thameslink and Great Northern season ticket holders receive a discount, equivalent to any increase announced in December 2018, on renewed season tickets in 2019.* (Paragraph 89)

**Fairer compensation schemes**

10. We acknowledge that the Government acted reasonably quickly to ensure train operating companies put in place additional compensation schemes over and above existing Delay Repay arrangements. We do not, however, accept the Secretary of State’s assertion that the additional schemes have ensured passengers were compensated straightforwardly and quickly. The schemes have complicated eligibility rules and place the onus on passengers to make a claim through relatively
complex processes. Non-season ticket holders were not able to apply to Thameslink’s and Great Northern’s schemes until 30 November, more than six months after 20 May. (Paragraph 108)

11. While it may be the case that it would be theoretically possible for the worst-affected passengers to claim around 10% of the cost of their annual season ticket, this would require them to navigate the additional compensation scheme and make individual claims for each delayed service throughout the year. In the chaos of this summer, when at points it was not clear that significant portions of the railway were operating to any timetable at all, this would have been virtually impossible. Even if passengers were able to make the claims, in many cases the level of reimbursement would be insufficient to compensate for additional costs incurred, such as for taxis and additional childcare, and unmonetised costs to working and family lives. (Paragraph 109)

12. The events of this year demonstrate an overwhelming case for automated, or automatic, compensation schemes. We therefore welcome the Government’s announcement of stronger obligations on future train operating companies within the franchising system, including the provision of simple, one-click automated schemes enabled via smart card registration or smart phone apps. The key to this is successful roll out of smart ticketing technology across the network, which the Government has committed to achieve by the end of 2018. The Government must now set a measurable target for implementation of “one click” automated compensation schemes on commuter rail routes. These schemes must be written into contracts as they are re-let. Those who suffered most in the timetabling crisis should also benefit from automated compensation schemes as soon as possible. We recommend the Government ensure, through franchise renegotiations if necessary, that smart automated compensation schemes are piloted on Govia Thameslink Railway, Northern and TransPennine Express commuter routes by the end of 2019. (Paragraph 110)

Meaningful consultation and proper impact assessment

13. A key lesson from the May 2018 timetable change is that a significant proportion of rail users do not feel the industry is listening to them and taking proper account of their needs. If trust in the railway is to be restored the rail industry must substantially improve its engagement with passengers, including through ongoing and meaningful consultation on proposed service changes. Good practice, such as Govia Thameslink Railway’s active engagement with Rail User Groups on the design of some its services, exists but the broader approach to passenger consultation is patchy at best and perfunctory at worse. The Department for Transport’s rail franchising teams must more actively ensure that all passenger rail franchisees adopt best practice and innovative approaches and adhere to their contractual obligations to consult on all significant service changes. (Paragraph 128)

14. Where there are major timetable changes on a complex interrelated network some highly-valued services may have to change, and some passengers may lose out. It is vital in these circumstances that passengers’ voices are heard, and effective mitigations fully explored. This does not appear to have been the case in relation to
service alterations affecting East Midlands Trains, Thameslink and Great Northern passengers. Consultations on the May timetable were completed before these changes were planned. This was in part because of knock on effects of work to upgrade the Midland Mainline. Many passengers were consulted on significant service improvements; what they got were substantial reductions. In these circumstances we cannot agree with the Department for Transport that the industry’s consultations on the May 2018 timetable were “very comprehensive”. Future national rail timetable changes must adhere to agreed timescales and allow sufficient time for meaningful consultation with passengers. (Paragraph 129)

15. As set out earlier in this Report, the industry and Network Rail have now adopted a more cautious approach to national rail timetable change in December 2018, and possibly beyond. We recommend the Department for Transport use this period of relative stability to re-assess the effects of the May 2018 timetable change, identifying stations that have lost a significant number of services, particularly at peak times. The Department and Network Rail should work with the operators and engage with passengers to design mitigations that better meet the needs of people travelling to and from the worst-affected stations. Evidence to our inquiry suggests these will include Sheffield, Hitchin, Harpenden, Luton Airport Parkway, Leagrave, Harlington and Flitwick. (Paragraph 130)
Formal minutes

Tuesday 27 November

Members present:

Lilian Greenwood, in the Chair
Ruth Cadbury  Huw Merriman
Robert Courts  Graham Stringer
Paul Girvan  Daniel Zeichner

Draft Report (Rail timetable changes: May 2018), proposed by the Chair, brought up and read.

Ordered, That the draft Report be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraphs 1 to 129 read and agreed to.

Summary agreed to.

Resolved, That the Report be the Seventh Report of the Committee to the House.

Ordered, That the Chair make the Report to the House.

Ordered, That embargoed copies of the Report be made available, in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order No. 134.

[Adjourned till Monday 3 December at 4.15pm]
Witnesses

The following witnesses gave evidence. Transcripts can be viewed on the inquiry publications page of the Committee’s website.

Monday 18 June 2018

Charles Horton, Chief Executive Officer, and Nick Brown, Chief Operating Officer, GTR, David Brown, Managing Director, and Rob Warnes, Performance and Planning Director, Arriva Rail North Ltd

Jo Kaye, Managing Director, System Operator, John Halsall, Route Managing Director, South East, and Martin Frobisher, Route Managing Director, London North Western, Network Rail

Monday 9 July 2018

Chris Gibb, Chair, Thameslink 2018 Industry Readiness Board, Chris Green, Chair of Thameslink 2018 Industry Readiness Board’s Independent Assurance Panel

Wednesday 5 September 2018

Emily Ketchin, Harpenden Thameslink Commuters’ Group, Stephen Brookes MBE, Northern Rail user and accessibility campaigner, Anthony Smith, Chief Executive, Transport Focus, Alex Hayman, Director and Managing Director, Public Markets, Which?

Monday 22 October 2018

Rt Hon Chris Grayling MP, Secretary of State for Transport, Ruth Hannant, Director General for Rail, Peter Wilkinson, Managing Director, Passenger Services, and Gary Bogan, Director, Rail North Partnership, Department for Transport

Professor Stephen Glaister CBE, Chair, Ian Prosser CBE, HM Chief Inspector of Railways and Director, Rail Safety, and Dan Brown, Director, Strategy and Policy, Office of Rail and Road
Published written evidence

The following written evidence was received and can be viewed on the inquiry publications page of the Committee’s website.

RTC numbers are generated by the evidence processing system and so may not be complete.

1. Alcock, Mr Mike (RTC0002)
2. Alexander, Joel (RTC0017)
3. Allen, Joanna (RTC0064)
4. Andrews, Mr Alexander (RTC0011)
5. APTU (Association of Public Transport Users) (RTC0059)
6. Baron, Miss Jemma (RTC0075)
7. Blake, Mr Michael (RTC0044)
8. Blomfield MP, Paul (RTC0098)
9. Bonner, Mr Andrew (RTC0089)
10. Carter, Mrs Emma (RTC0062)
11. Chahal, Aman (RTC0010)
12. Department for Transport (RTC0084)
13. Dickson, Mr James (RTC0005)
14. Donson, Mrs Faye (RTC0021)
15. Dyer, Mr Ian (RTC0026)
16. Fox, Dr Celina (RTC0057)
17. Fox-additional submission, Dr Celina (RTC0066)
18. Friends of Eccles Station (RTC0043)
19. Fry Law (RTC0080)
20. Gem, Mr Martin (RTC0087)
21. Gloess, Paul (RTC0076)
22. Greenwich Line Users’ Group (RTC0061)
23. GTR-Additional written evidence (RTC0027)
24. HADRAG: The Halifax & District Rail Action Group (RTC0097)
25. Harding, David (RTC0069)
26. Harpenden & St Albans Commuter/Passenger Groups (RTC0083)
27. Harpenden Churches Together (RTC0033)
28. Harpenden Thameslink Commuters’ Group (RTC0047)
29. Harrison, Mrs Harriet (RTC0009)
30. Hastings & Rother RUGs Alliance (RTC0063)
31. Hatfield Association of Rail Travellers (RTC0073)
32. Henry, My Michael (RTC0012)
33. Hindley, Ann (RTC0046)
34 Hitchin Rail Commuters Group/Hitchin Rail Users Group (RTC0055)
35 Hoddinott, Councillor Emma (RTC0052)
36 Isherwood, Mr Robin (RTC0004)
37 Johnson, Mr Andrew (RTC0090)
38 Johnson, Mr Clive (RTC0048)
39 Jones, Mr Philip (RTC0022)
40 Kirkdale, Mr Paul (RTC0091)
41 Lakes Line Rail User Group (LLRUG) (RTC0029)
42 Lancashire Rail Ramblers (RTC0050)
43 Lancaster, Joe (RTC0054)
44 Martindale, Dr Anne-Marie (RTC0031)
45 Matosic, Ms Marina (RTC0015)
46 Meldreth, Shepreth and Foxton Rail User Group and Community Rail Partnership (RTC0068)
47 Mills, Mr Charles (RTC0036)
48 Moore, Mr Matthew (RTC0024)
49 Morgan, Mr Dan (RTC0008)
50 Morley, Mrs Amy (RTC0007)
51 Northern Rail (RTC0001)
52 Northern-Additional written evidence (RTC0028)
53 Norton, Ms Sophie (RTC0018)
54 Page, Roy (RTC0030)
55 Paulley, Mr Doug (RTC0081)
56 Pennington, Mrs Carolyn (RTC0019)
57 Pickton, Ms Claire (RTC0072)
58 Pilkington, Mr Alan (RTC0032)
59 Preston Park Train Campaign (RTC0071)
60 Prince, David (RTC0041)
61 Rail Delivery Group (RTC0094)
62 Railfuture (RTC0039)
63 Robertson, Mr Oliver (RTC0014)
64 Robinson, Mr Geoff (RTC0040)
65 Rolfe, Mr Ian (RTC0070)
66 Rushton, Mr John (RTC0065)
67 Sample, Elly (RTC0025)
68 Sawyer, Robert (RTC0095)
69 SHRIMP (St Leonards & Hastings Rail Improvement Programme) (RTC0067)
70 Sinai, Gavin (RTC0053)
Slaithwaite & Marsden Action on Rail Transport (RTC0049)
Ms Smith, Celia (RTC0038)
St Albans City & District Council (RTC0056)
St Albans Commuter and Passenger Action Group (RTC0096)
Mr Talbot, John (RTC0086)
Transport Focus (RTC0045)
TravelWatch NorthWest (RTC0058)
Trifari, Leigh (RTC0088)
TSSA (RTC0085)
Dr Twomey, Katherine (RTC0042)
West Sussex County Council (RTC0093)
Ms Wheatley, Helen (RTC0034)
Which? (RTC0077)
Wightman, Andrew (RTC0092)
Williams, Roy (RTC0013)
Winfield, Nick (RTC0037)
young, Mark (RTC0016)
List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliament

All publications from the Committee are available on the [publications page](#) of the Committee’s website. The reference number of the Government’s response to each Report is printed in brackets after the HC printing number.

### Session 2017–19

| First Report | Community transport and the Department for Transport’s proposed consultation | HC 480 (HC 832) |
| Second Report | Improving air quality | HC 433 (HC 1149) |
| Third Report | Airports National Policy Statement | HC 548 (Cm 9624) |
| Fourth Report | Rail Infrastructure investment | HC 582 (HC 1557) |
| Fifth Report | Intercity East Coast rail franchise | HC 891 |
| Sixth Report | Appointment of the Chair of the Office of Rail and Road | HC 1510 |
| First Special Report | Vauxhall Zafira fires: Government Response to the Committee’s Tenth Report of Session 2016–17 | HC 516 |
| Second Special Report | Community transport and the Department for Transport’s proposed consultation: Government Response to the Committee’s First Report of Session 2017–2019 | HC 832 |
| Third Special Report | Improving air quality: Government Response to the Committee’s Second Report of Session 2017–2019 | HC 1149 |
| Fourth Special Report | Rail infrastructure investment: Government and Office of Rail and Road Responses to the Committee’s Fourth Report of Session 2017–19 | HC 1557 |
| Fifth Special Report | Intercity East Coast franchise: Government Response to the Committee’s Fifth Report of Session 2017–19 | HC 1729 |