



Liverpool City Region All Party Parliamentary Group

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Current rail service issues in Liverpool City Region

Follow up to LCR APPG meetings on 4/1/19 and 14/1/19

Friday 22nd March, 1 - 2.30pm, Metro Mayor's Boardroom, 1 Mann Island, Liverpool, L3 1BP

Non-Verbatim Minutes

Chair, Alison McGovern MP, welcomed all attendees including the and Metro Mayor, Steve Rotheram.

Leo Goodwin, Chief Executive, Transpennine Express (TPE), made an introductory statement:

- Last session looked at the causes, today we can look at what has been done in response.
- TPE has taken positive steps to build resilience. All our trains operate through Manchester so sorting out congestion there has been and remains a priority. Measures introduced have worked.
- Public performance measure – 70% before Xmas and now at 85%. Broadly back to normal.
- 2019 is big year for new trains – three brand new fleets following £550m investment. In Merseyside will see a complete change – all will be brand new.
- Two suppliers – one Spanish and one Japanese. Different rates of progress. Japanese ahead of schedule and Spanish running a little late.
- Delivery begins next month and then will introduce the new trains as soon as staff are trained.
- Also plan to expand services through introduction of Liverpool to Glasgow (Autumn 2019) and Liverpool to Edinburgh (December 2019) services.
- We need to rebuild confidence and trust from public and with staff. Customer satisfaction has gone from 75 to 85. Aiming to win back customers.

David Brown, Chief Executive, and Chris Jackson, Regional Director West, Northern Rail, made the following points:

- Performance has improved – now better than before May. Ormskirk line, a particular concern at the last meeting, is a lot better.
- There has been a joint plan with Network Rail – now top end of ppms 80%. Our joint plan is to continue the improvement to enable getting to 90%.
- Seen stabilisation of network. Short trains being reduced. It is diesel trains that get split and end up being short – Manchester to Liverpool is particularly affected.
- The situation is far more stable than before Xmas. Seeing more satisfaction and volume numbers increasing.
- Service promise is that May timetable change goes well. When get new trains will drop into new timetable but NB timetable not reliant on those new trains.
- Pacers **will** be phased out.
- Making changes to Lime street so can use Ticket vending machines and improving smart card retailing and take up.
- RMT dispute has been suspended with a programme of talks facilitated by Sir Brendan Barber planned for 3-4 months to sort finally. But already Saturdays are better both operationally and for customers.
- Also had positive changes to the provision of Sunday trains due to commence at the end of the month. Employ considerably more people willing to work these days.

Anna-Jane Hunter, Director North of England Rail, Network Rail, and Marcus Barnes, Senior Sponsor, Network Rail, also made some opening comments:

- Andrew Haines has had a 100 day plan of putting passengers first and the results are showing.
- We plan to restructure into 5 regions so further devolution of decision making is embedded into the system.
- This is a good thing as it means more understanding at local level and more accountability.
- Report on Greater Manchester congestion and reliability will be published in next two weeks. Will include initial recommendations for TfN to consider.
- Some changes may need planning permission and possibly involve land acquisition
- TfN are focussed on capacity but needs to be assessed on performance as this is what the public value.
- Richard George workstream is pulling together list of improvements right now. Aiming for asset reliability eg less points failure. Tolerance of failure is lower now.

Metro Mayor Steve Rotheram responded making a number of comments:

- We still aren't where we were meant to be as agreed 18 months ago. Still fewer services.
- I have asked for short formation to be ended. Means performance not good enough
- Richard George was forced through TfN by Andy Burnham and myself.
- Underlying problem with the rail sector is that it is too fragmented. National ownership is the solution.
- My question is: how bad do things have to get to before the franchise is withdrawn?

- Chris Grayling said he was blindsided by what happened last year. Sorry don't accept that. There is a fundamental problem between DfT and its disconnection with what the public want, need and deserve.

David Hoggarth, Strategic Rail Director, Transport for the North, was invited to add his perspective. He made the following points:

- TfN is a partnership with DfT. We wanted full devolution ; however, we at least we are now more involved but the Department still holds the purse strings.
- The [Judith] Blake and [Andrew] Jones Review is about to go the TfN board – one issue will be the balance of responsibilities and between the North and DfT.
- In response to a question regards what can MPs ask DfT for in order to speed up Northern Powerhouse Rail, £70bn will be required to deliver the whole Strategic Transport Plan by 2050, with up to £39bn for Northern Powerhouse Rail , although with prioritised funding, the project could start sooner.
- TfN will be submitting to the Williams Review making the case for more devolution.

A number of final comments were made:

- NPR plan will be broken up into rail delivery plans. To deliver the first phase of NPR will take a minimum of 5 years but probably longer, up to ten.
- There is a problem of skills because if we got the funding sooner, we would not necessarily be able to deliver the infrastructure improvements as soon as we want.
- Lime Street is set to be improved notably the concourse but ultimately Liverpool City Region needs an iconic gateway station.
- We need to get balance between building new services or improving existing services. Sometimes the latter can deliver what the former aims to achieve.
- Arriva are keen on longer trains which are more reliable than more engineering and disruption.

Chair, Alison McGovern MP and Metro Mayor, Steve Rotheram, concluded the meeting by saying that the next milestone is May when a new timetable introduced again. The Group should meet with those present today again in the summer. It was also discussed and agreed that a future meeting should look at buses

Attendees:

- Alison McGovern MP, Chair
- Steve Rotheram, Metro Mayor for Liverpool City Region
- Dan Carden MP, Liverpool Walton
- Marie Rimmer MP, St Helens South and Whiston

Liverpool City Region APPG Group lcrappg@devoconnect.co.uk Please follow [@LCRAPPG](https://twitter.com/LCRAPPG)

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