

Transport for the North Railway Performance Update

Transport for the North Board meeting
February 2019
Richard George

Draft 2

Update Agenda

1. Background, Remit and Approach
2. Findings – Autumn 2018
3. Conclusions – End of 2018
4. Recommendations – January 2019
5. Implementation
6. Key Issues Going Forward

Background, Remit and Approach

- Unacceptable performance and a break down in process and trust following May 2018 Timetable changes.
- Commissioned by Secretary of State to assist TfN and the Industry – to improve performance in passengers interests.
- Independent Industry expert with 40 years experience, not aligned to any of the railway companies
- Remit – To Improve performance across the industry in the North. To work across the industry in passengers interests, by helping the industry take the difficult decisions; to encourage those within the industry and to explain to those outside.
- Approach :-
 - Not to write a report on what went wrong, but to find ways to help and improve.
 - Assist with cross industry issues, talk to people across the industry, observe operations, advise, encourage, promote improvements.
 - No authority. Importantly, not an additional level of management.
 - Small team assisted with data collection and observations.

Findings in Autumn 2018

- Started work on this project on 24th September 2018, with total co-operation and assistance from all the operators across the industry throughout.
- Presentation made to Rail North Committee on 13th November 2018 with the following provisional findings, in the summary:
 - *“What is clear is that the North of England has a much busier railway than it used to have and it requires greater operating discipline.*
 - *There are significant capacity issues that will become worse.*
 - *Some capacity issues have not yet been fully addressed – Depot and stabling capacity are creating operating problems.*
 - *There are also indications that Signallers, Planners, Station Managers have been centralised for good reasons over several years – but this has reduced the level of local knowledge - this is key to responsive local operations.*
 - *Some of the industry structural and governance issues are not helping.*
 - *There are no “Quick Fixes”, many of these issues will take long term effort.”*
- The presentation at that time then itemised a long list of specific operating issues that needed to be addressed to improve performance.

Conclusions at the end of 2018

- Projects need to be delivered on time; but more importantly changes need to be understood across many companies, this is an inter-connected industry
- This is a much busier railway than it was - it needs some spare capacity to operate and is also likely to need greater maintenance attention in future.
- There are constraints on capacity at key locations that have a disproportionate impact;
- There is a loss of local knowledge that needs to be re-built or compensated for;
- Operational resilience needs to be overtly considered by senior operations managers at the timetable creation stage;
- Decisions need to be taken to protect operational resilience early in the process, the system will not take the decision; Robust, sometimes unpopular decisions have to be taken for everyone's benefit.
- Specific performance modelling should assist that decision making.
- There is some confused governance, a lack of system "thinking" with some inconsistencies between the Franchising process, operations and project delivery.
- The performance problems have been exacerbated by Industrial Relations issues;
- Some of the cross-industry structural and governance issues are not helping. The railways need more local liaison, local intervention rather than more top down governance.

Recommendations – Rail North Committee January 2019

- No additional paths to be planned on specific key corridors (Castlefield, Leeds-York)
- Depot and stabling investment need review
- Senior Operator involvement at TT process outset regarding performance and taking decisions
- Performance Modelling needs
- TPR building blocks need review
- Local Teams involving Plan/Signal/Station ops need to be re-created
- One Team at Manchester Piccadilly to improve communication lines
- Station dispatch training across many stations
- Signallers training should emphasise “local” training rather than generalist
- Station/Depot local planning should be earlier in the process
- Robust contingency plans for new trains will be necessary
- Cross company traincrew planning needs a re-think
- Leeds capacity for DEC 19 TT needs early discussion and PMO involvement to avoid error
- Infrastructure Maintenance going forward will need to keep improving
- Major Works – Strategic, cross industry Communications will be key
- Governance needs revision to reflect operational needs

In the meantime

- December 2018 has significantly stabilised the train performance across the region.
- Timetable readiness planning: The cross industry working at the right organisational level worked well.
- Network Rail's PMO in System Operator organisation is rigidly controlling the train planning process going forward.
- May 2019 TT will have further minor changes - But introduction of new rolling stock and associated traincrew changes are key risks to be managed – some trains look like being later than first planned
- December 2019 presents some challenges regarding new infrastructure needs – This is under active discussion across the industry early in the process.
- Unfortunately the IR situation is still not resolved

Implementation

- The recommendations were contributed to by the industry operators and were broadly accepted as a sound basis for improvement.
- Alliance Board of Northern/Network Rail have taken the recommendations as an Action Plan and have project management around delivery.
- The Supervisory Board for the North, which includes all industry operators is overseeing the process of implementation.
- Changes in the structure of Network Rail look like they will help rather than hinder the actions for implementation.

Key Issues Going Forward

- Stabilisation has occurred and improvement to performance now has a platform to build upon.
- PMO key to managing Timetable process and change currently. This is fine but for good reason the PMO is very conservative in its approach.
- **By May 2019**, we need to be in a position to:
 1. Implement the performance improvements and have a seamless May 2019 timetable change with new rolling stock and traincrew.
 - 2. Be able to publish “when” all the new service promises of the last few years will be met and/or which will not be met.**
 3. Re-structuring information from Blake/Jones Review and a restructured Network Rail.
 4. After that, the Industry should be standing without any “outside” assistance – that’s when I bow out.