Joint Performance Improvement Update
Issued 30 March 2018

This report gives progress on the joint improvement plan for Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR) and Network Rail with punctuality data by route, as well as the main operational issues in the period (there are 13, 4-week reporting periods per year), and planned customer improvements.

PPM* statistics and delay responsibility by route – Period 12 (to 3 March 2018)

Gatwick Express

[Graph showing Gatwick Express PPM statistics]

Great Northern

[Graph showing Great Northern Route PPM statistics]

[Graph showing Govia Thameslink Railway - Gatwick Express Route Delay Responsibility (13 Periods)]

* PPM = Percentage of Punctual Journeys
Southern

The public performance measure (PPM) data above shows the percentage of trains which arrive at their terminating station within five minutes of the planned arrival time. It combines figures for punctuality and reliability into a single performance measure.

A summary of key issues affecting performance in this period

In period 12, GTR’s PPM was 79.32% with the main incidents affecting performance being the severe winter weather in the Sussex area at the end of February/beginning of March, and also a track defect at City Thameslink on 14 February and a signalling fault near Sutton on 12 February.

The PPM for each of the brands for this period was: Gatwick Express 71.30%, Great Northern 79.25%, Southern 77.91% and Thameslink 84.35%.

Delivering improvements for passengers

Thameslink Class 700s

There are 71 class 700 trains in regular service between Brighton and London Bridge or Bedford; between Wimbledon, Sutton, St Albans and Luton; on the Sevenoaks route and between Horsham / Littlehampton and London. Since 26 February, we have been operating preview services through the canal tunnels at Kings Cross between Cambridge and Brighton, and between Peterborough and Horsham. This is in preparation for the major timetable change on all our routes from Sunday 20 May 2018.
Driver training programme
We are continuing with the UK’s biggest driver recruitment project so that we can cover today’s service, support driver conversion training on all the new trains we are bringing in, and be ready for the additional services that we will run in future.

In the four weeks to 3 March, on Thameslink 2 additional trainee passed their training bringing the total since January 2015 to 137, and there were 166 trainees in progress. On Great Northern, 2 trainee drivers passed making a total of 157, with 82 in training. On Southern, 7 drivers passed their training making 236 in total since January 2015. There are 79 Southern drivers in training.

Performance Strategy
Huge investment is being put into the railway which will ultimately deliver more capacity through new and longer trains at the end of the Thameslink programme in 2018, as well as a transformed station at London Bridge. However, this major construction work is a significant contributor to the deterioration in punctuality across services, more so than anyone anticipated. At the end of 2015, an independent study was undertaken to better understand the impact of the work at London Bridge on the train service. The study revealed that since the work started in 2014 the network has fundamentally changed with a reduction in platforms and approach tracks at London Bridge, with more services diverted into London Victoria or via Herne Hill, leading to knock on delays being longer and being felt over a wider area than ever before.

The Thameslink programme works are at their most difficult phase with the infrastructure at its maximum level of restriction. To mitigate this challenge we have established an Alliance with Network Rail which focuses on improving service reliability and performance. The analysis provided by this study has given the GTR and Network Rail teams a fresh perspective on how to address some of the issues affecting train punctuality. As a result, GTR and Network Rail have defined joint work-streams as part of the Performance Strategy. These have been developed and teams across both businesses are working tirelessly to change performance now and in the longer term.

Network Rail - improving reliability
In late February we began a major piece of work at Earlswood junction, just south of Redhill, to renew one of the busiest railway junctions in the south east. This project forms a key part of a £300m government-funded programme to tackle delay hotspots, improve reliability across the network and support the new, high-frequency Thameslink timetable.

As well as work on renewing switches and crossings – moveable sections of track that guide trains from one track to another and allow them to cross paths – we also carried out drainage work nearby at Horley and Merstham. In addition, our high output ballast cleaner train covered 6km of track, replacing old worn ballast with new ballast to aid track drainage and provide better quality foundations for the track. To see these trains in action and find out more about how they work, click here.

On the first weekend of work, there were significant delays to passengers trying to board the replacement buses between Redhill and Gatwick due to high demand for these services. Recognising this challenge, the following weekend Network Rail and GTR worked together to open up an alternative train route to Gatwick Airport via Horsham by moving some planned engineering work on that route to later in the year.

We’ve also had to extend this project for an additional weekend as a result of the snow and poor weather limiting work on the weekend of 3/4 March.

As well as the work at Earlswood, we were busy with several other projects across the Southern network during Period 12. We continued our power supply upgrade to allow longer trains to run more reliably, with work taking place on the Brighton Main Line and both the East and West Coastway lines.

Our programme of renewals and upgrades to customer information systems, including new display screens and improved public address systems, also continued during this period with work taking place at several stations including Haywards Heath, Purley, Reigate and Coulsdon South.

Other work on the network during this period included track renewals between Streatham and Tooting and at Ham Street.