



# Rail Franchise Customer Reports:

## c2c

### Research Debrief

Prepared for: Passenger Focus

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Prepared in compliance with the International quality standard covering market research, ISO 20252 (2012), The MRS Code of Conduct, and the Data Protection Act 1998 by Illuminas, 183-203 Eversholt Street, London NW1 1BU, UK

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# Background, Objectives and Methodology



# Background

- C2c won a further contract to operate on the lines to Shoeburyness, Southend and Grays, out of Fenchurch Street in November 2014. This means that c2c will hold the franchise until 2029
- Part of Passenger Focus's role is to establish customer aspirations for franchises and to assess if Train Operating Companies (TOCs) are adhering to best practice. Previous research projects including *Passenger Power!* have highlighted that consumers want to be better informed about the franchise process and specifically, how successful bidders perform on the promises they make when bidding
- New franchises and franchise renewals are now required to issue a Customer Report upon commencement of their contract and provide updates on this on at least an annual basis. GTR was the first and c2c the second franchise required to issue such a report
- Given the above, Passenger Focus wanted to undertake research to obtain passenger feedback on the Customer Report issued by c2c in order to establish the extent to which this report meets passengers' expectations in terms of both content and format.

c2c



# Objectives

- The overall aim of the research was to collect passenger feedback on the Customer Report issued by c2c, to assess if the report was in line with expectations and, as such, help establish what constitutes best practice in terms of Customer Reports for other TOCs in the future
  
- The specific objectives of the research were as follows:
  - Understand passengers' use and experience of the railways under the existing franchises, their frustrations and their aspirations for the future
  - Explore passengers' awareness of the franchising process and its outcomes in their area
  - Assess passengers' exposure to any communications regarding the renewed franchise and their commitments
  - Obtain passengers' feedback on the new Customer Reports including their availability, presentation, content and credibility
  - Obtain passengers' reactions to the franchisees' commitments and the extent to which these meet passengers' expectations
  - Explore how passengers wish to be updated regarding the franchisees' progress in fulfilling their commitments and how they should be held to account for any shortcomings
  - Gauge the potential impact of Customer Reports and the franchisees' commitments on passengers' perceptions of their relationship with and trust in the operators.



# Methodology



- Initial focus groups allowed us to measure passenger experiences of using, and aspirations for, the c2c network prior to exposure to the Customer Report
- Passengers were then sent and tasked with reading the c2c Customer Report and fed back their views on it in a second reconvened group

GROUP	INITIAL GROUP DATE	RECONVENED GROUP DATE	GROUP LOCATION	DEMOGRAPHICS
Commuters	6/11	25/11	London	Younger, C1C2D
Business/Leisure	6/11	25/11	London	Older, ABC1

- Both initial and reconvened groups were 2 hours in length
- Focus groups contained 10-11 respondents.

# Experiences of using c2c



# A good service that rarely fails to deliver

- Experiences of travelling with c2c are strikingly positive
- Both Commuters and Business/Leisure passengers have few gripes with the service
- Passengers are able to compare c2c with other TOCs that they use, such as First Capital Connect (Govia Thameslink Railway) and Southern
  - c2c considered superior to these
- Passengers believe that c2c are aided in the delivery of a good service because they are operating a limited network
  - A belief that it is easier to maintain infrastructure and rolling stock and solve issues when they occur
- The few issues that passengers do have, particularly commuters, centre around value for money
- Despite the relatively superior service, cost of travel considered expensive compared to other countries and other modes of transport
  - Annual price rises 'relentless' and disproportionate against inflation
  - And not reflected in ever improving service.

*"I used to live up near Hampstead and used the Thameslink North service, that was terrible compared to c2c. It was always delayed and you could never get a seat."  
Commuter, Younger*

*"I call it the posh train. You can look out of the window and you get some nice views on the way to Southend. It's comfortable as well and the air conditioning is working."  
Business/Leisure, Older*





# Passengers least satisfied with staff assistance on board the train, facilities at the station and cost of travel

Passengers were asked to rank on a scale of 1-10 the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with each of the following statements (1=completely disagree, 10= completely agree). They were asked to think about their experience when travelling with c2c/GTR

- There has been staff on board the train to help me out with my journey if needed
- There has been a good choice of shops and food outlets at the station
- I think that the amount that I paid for my train ticket was reasonable
- I found the number of tickets that I could purchase for travel confusing
- My service has often been delayed or suffered disruption
- The train has rarely been over crowded and I could usually get a seat
- When there has been disruption to my service, I am kept updated
- I felt that the train operator treated me as a valued customer
- It has been easy to find out anything I wanted to know about the TOC
- There has always been staff at the station to help me out with my journey if needed
- The train has been maintained to a good standard and was clean
- The trains ran frequently enough to meet my needs
- It has been easy to find out information about my train at the station
- Whenever I consulted a member of staff they have always been happy to help



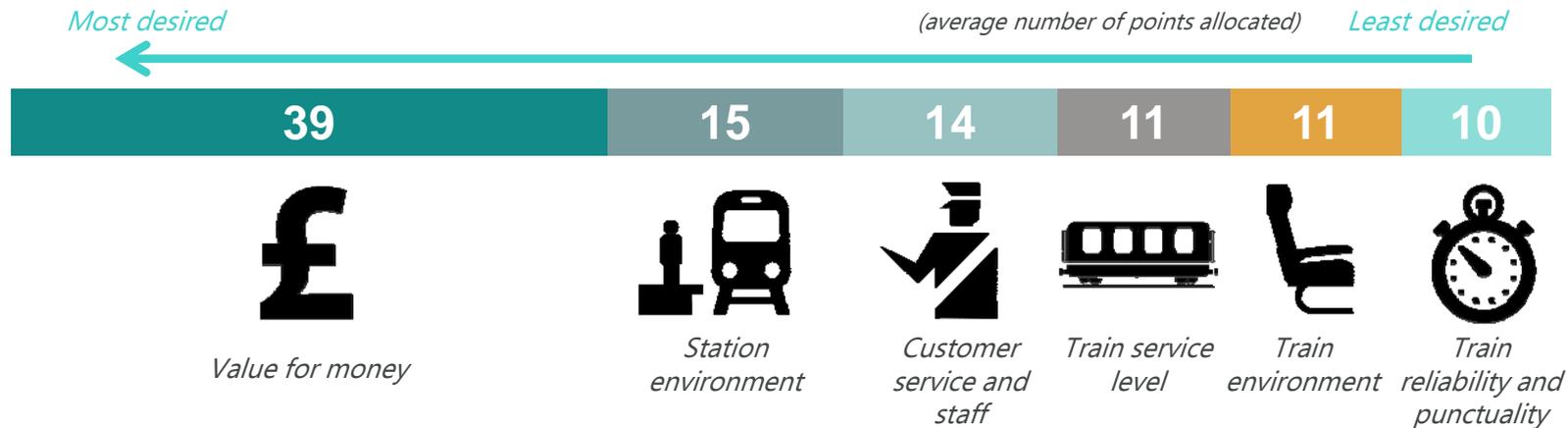
Base: Total c2c 21, Commuters 11, Business/Leisure 10, GTR 52  
 These figures should be used only as an indication, due to the low base sizes

# Aspirations for the c2c service



# Improved value for money the standout aspiration

- Value for money is the overwhelming standout area where improvement is most desired
- This is not to say that passengers are completely dissatisfied with the cost of travel, but perhaps more of a reflection that experiences with the other aspects of the service are more positive



## Why is improved value for money so highly desired?

- Because all other areas of the c2c service are considered good and satisfaction with them is quite high
- Journeys are often short and passengers are more accepting of crowding and the train environment
- Business/Leisure** passengers find some standard single tickets expensive (particularly when travelling with the family), though advanced tickets are considered better value for money
- Commuters** spend 'excessive' amounts on season tickets and believe they receive little by way of rewards for loyalty in return.

Passengers were asked to allocate 100 points across six key areas for improvement. They were required to award the highest number of points to the area which they felt needed most improvement

*"If you were to spend that much money in the Supermarket you'd have vouchers coming out of your eyeballs!"*  
Commuter, Younger



# Desired improvements are limited

- Given that passengers are generally happy with the service that they receive from c2c, desired service improvements are limited
- Enhanced value for money is the main desire and consequently the majority of improvements that respondents suggest are centred around this
  - That includes enhancements to the way in which tickets are delivered, simplicity in fare structures, and the introduction of loyalty schemes, but ultimately, reductions or freezes in ticket prices
- Passengers are also able to identify some improvements that they would like to see made to the environment at the station in both larger and smaller, more rural stations
- Across the areas of train service level, train environment, and train reliability & punctuality, passengers struggle to identify any significant improvements.



# Aspirations: Value for money

- Passengers suggest many spontaneous improvements which if implemented, would enhance their belief that they receive a better deal

Issue	Suggested improvements
Loyalty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Introduction of a loyalty scheme where points are accrued and can be used for non railway related activities</li><li>Offers and vouchers available for train tickets e.g. 50% off next journey. And for days out e.g. half price tickets to the zoo etc.</li><li>E-mails about when advance tickets become available so that the cheapest fare can be purchased</li></ul>
Pricing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>No price rises on standard tickets and season tickets</li><li>Extending Oyster card zone, so Oyster (and Oyster fares) can be used further down the line</li></ul>
Provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Able to purchase one ticket for the whole journey, regardless of TOC travelled on</li><li>Smartcards for convenience purposes</li></ul>
Choice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Simplify the number of tickets that can be purchased for transparency on the cheapest available fare.</li></ul>

*"It would be great if I could use my Oyster card for my whole journey. It would save me hassle queuing up at the station for my ticket."  
Business/Leisure, Older*

*"If I'm taking all of the kids, I do think it would be cheaper to take the car."  
Business/Leisure, Older*



## Aspirations: Customer service and staff

- Additional staff on board the train and at the station are mainly desired by Business/Leisure passengers :
  - Predominantly for safety and security purposes late at night and during off peak-times
  - Staff also utilised to keep the trains and stations cleaner
  - Also, to assist with ticket purchasing at the station, to ensure that the best value ticket is always purchased
- Staff considered helpful, friendly and knowledgeable (particularly compared to other TOC staff)

*"I can't wait to get off the train sometimes, it's deserted and eerie."  
Business/leisure,  
Older*

## Aspirations: Train service levels

- Passengers are largely satisfied with the frequency with which the trains run. Albeit:
  - **Peak** - More carriages desired on existing services to reduce congestion
  - **Off-peak** - Trains to run later into the night coming back from London.

*"You go out on a Friday night and have to cut your night short or stay on a friend's sofa because the last train out of Liverpool Street goes at about midnight."  
Business/leisure, Older*



## Aspirations: Train environment

- On the whole, the train environment is considered good. Because passengers are making mainly short trips they can be more accommodating of any deficiencies

### Cleaner Trains

- More staff on board cleaning
- More (accessible) bins on board the train

### Technological

- Wi-Fi on board the train

### Seating

- More seats during peak hours, to reduce standing



## Aspirations: Train reliability and punctuality

- Both commuters and business/leisure passengers suffer little disruption
  - If it does occur, delays are often minor, consisting of a few minutes
- Advanced notification (or more prominent advertising) at the station of engineering works at weekends desired
- E-mail notification of planned engineering works desired.

*"It's often a case that you hear about disruption on the radio or someone in the office mentions that the trains are delayed, but when you get to the station the c2c trains are all running fine!"*  
Commuter, Younger



# Aspirations: Station Environment

- Passengers are able to suggest improvements that could be made to the station environment, particularly at the more rural stations that have limited facilities

## Cleaner stations

- More staff clearing litter and better provision for rubbish disposal

## Better catering facilities

- Shops to buy food and drink (particularly at smaller stations)
- More choice within vending machines other than crisps, chocolate and soft-drinks



## More ticket purchasing facilities

- More staff to help with purchasing tickets
- More (working) ticket machines, at several points within the station and not all in one main concourse

*"It's lonely at Rainham station at night, there's no one there so it can make you feel quite unsecure."  
Business/leisure, Older*

## Increased security at the station

- More staff, particularly at night
- Better lighting to increase brightness of station at night
- CCTV cameras more prominent and sign-posted

## More comfort

- Wi-Fi at the station
- (At smaller stations) Seating on the platform
  - Protection from the elements e.g. shelter.



# Awareness of Franchise Process



# What do passengers know about rail franchising?

- Knowledge of the rail franchise process is vague and there was little understanding on how bids were won
- Where there is understanding, it is informed by:
  - Memories of 1996 (when c2c took control)
  - The media (particularly the Virgin Trains West Coast route 'debacle' in 2012)
  - Other industries that run franchise models e.g. fast-food chains

<i><b>What passengers know</b></i>	<i><b>What passengers don't know</b></i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Different train companies operate different parts of the network</li><li>• TOCs bid against each other to run the service within a region</li><li>• Different operators of infrastructure and trains</li><li>• Government are involved "in some way"</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Criteria for evaluating bids, and who sets these criteria</li><li>• Who decides which bidder is awarded the contract, or anything about the stages in the process</li><li>• Length of contract</li><li>• That passengers have some input in franchise process</li><li>• What the scale of change could be if a new TOC is awarded the franchise</li><li>• That TOCs receive subsidy from the government to run the franchise/or pay them</li></ul>

*"I think different people control the tracks and trains and stations, but couldn't tell you who the companies were. National Rail Enquiries sounds familiar but I think they are to do with time tabling."  
Business/Leisure, Older*



# Little knowledge about renewal of c2c franchise

- Several days before the new franchise contract commenced when the first stage of the research was conducted, no Business/Leisure passengers could recall hearing anything about the renewal
- One or two Commuters did know about c2c being re-awarded the franchise and heard about this via the local news
- Passengers were not surprised that they had not heard about the renewal
  - Had a new operator been awarded the contract, they would have expected to hear about this
- News of the renewal is met with positivity
  - All happy that c2c have been awarded a new, long-term contract
  - Would be disappointed if a new operator was installed

*"I knew that c2c run the trains that I take, but I didn't know how they got there in the first place or that they were going to be there for the foreseeable future."  
Business/Leisure, Older*

# Reactions towards the c2c Customer Report



# Initial reactions towards c2c Customer Report

- Passengers not entirely surprised that c2c have produced the Customer Report
  - A feeling that c2c are good at communication and have produced similar material before
- On first review of the report, on the whole, passengers are happy with the content and presentation
- This is within the context of passengers' good relationship with c2c and their experiences with c2c being largely positive
  - Feeling that c2c have 'nothing to prove' by producing the report
- Upon further scrutiny, passengers are disappointed that the report fails to address their main concern: cost of travel
- Moreover, after exposure to a similar report (*GTR connections*) they can identify that the c2c report could be presented more clearly, concisely and graphically
- In the reconvened groups that followed the launch of the customer report, no-one could recall having seen a copy outside of the research setting
  - Most were aware and had read previous material produced by c2c (newsletters and a couple mentions of the customer charter)
  - Therefore, passengers said they would be likely to take notice of the customer report if they saw it at the station or on-board the train and read at least parts of it.

*"I found the whole package good. Very good, it was well presented, easy to follow, I thought it was very good."  
Business/Leisure, Older*





# Good content on the whole, presentation needs some work

## ***Content***

- Informative and interesting to read
- Information communicated using appropriate terms
- Messages, on the whole, delivered quickly and succinctly
- Lacks information on the only real pain point for customers (value for money and cost)

## ***Presentation***

- About the right length, could be condensed in places
- Colours liked; pink striking and eye-catching
- Too much white space in places – close up
- Bullet points favoured and could be used more across the report
- Headings could be better utilised to aid sign-posting
- Infographics 'quirky' and different, but more 'real-life' pictures desired
- Consistent with other c2c produced material

## ***Availability***

- No-one could recall seeing the report at the station
- Some desire electronic versions, with less important information and detail
- Customer Reports/posters desired on trains

## ***Credibility***

- Some of what is promised is ambitious and brave, but believable
- Passengers' optimistic about c2c's promises as a result of their existing positive impression of the TOC.



# Detailed review: front cover

- Striking, eye-catching front cover that would make passengers want to 'pick-up' a copy
  - More could be done to explain the content inside and the 'Customer Report' notion.

Good use of colours – white on pink stands out and is eye-catching

Some confusion as to whether the person on the front cover is a customer or a member of staff

Picture should clearly be of passengers

More 'realistic' picture desired e.g. commuters boarding a train

*"To be honest I feel that it's just, a bit superficial, there should be a crowd of commuters on the cover."*  
Business/Leisure, Older



Good that the words 'Customer Report' are used and stand-out, but more could be done to explain what a Customer Report is

Looks professional

*"It comes across as like, you know, business as usual. They don't want to go overboard and celebrate the fact that they've got [the franchise] again, they're quite committed and don't want to come across as abrupt."*  
Business/Leisure, Older





# Detailed review: A welcome message from the MD

- A good initial message that is customer focussed and interesting
  - The inclusion of commitments on the page immediately draws attention and most were happy to continue reading the report after the first two pages
- Some desire for text to be condensed and message made shorter.

Viewed as the main part of the report

A lot of detail and text – could be condensed for easier reading – one page is viewed as optimal and use of bullet points where possible

*"I just think two pages is a bit much. I think that you know, again a message from the Managing Director should be as succinct as possible. I mean I know he's trying to do that, but like two pages of it is a bit much."*  
Business/Leisure, Older



Sections on the page could be better signposted

*"Maybe even if they had a feedback tag line there or Twitter handle or something, you know."*  
Business/Leisure, Older

c2c ownership enlightening

Commitments set out straight away – don't have to hunt through the booklet for them

Most interesting part but could be made more prominent on the page

Good to have Julian Drury's picture – puts a face to the brand

Contact details e.g. Twitter/e-mail desired



# Detailed review: Britain's Best Railway

- Most struggle to understand the purpose of the page and consequently view it as irrelevant
  - If information is needed, could be incorporated into another page
- Blank space needs to be filled.

Feels very corporate and not customer friendly

Some felt it resembled a contents page

Irrelevant and doesn't communicate anything worthwhile

*"Yeah, just a bit pointless. If they're going to have a page with this kind of stuff in, they need a bit more visual."  
Commuter, Younger*

Large blank space – looks incomplete – "is something missing?"

**Britain's Best Railway**

Our vision is to make c2c rail services the very best we can.

Our approach is based on five core values:

- 1** Customers
- 2** Safety
- 3** Community and sustainability
- 4** Leadership and people
- 5** Excellence

Together our values help us focus on improving the quality of our train services to promote growth and the value of c2c railways to our customers, stakeholders and the local community.

4

Information could be communicated elsewhere instead of a whole page being used for it

*"Maybe you could shorten that bit and put it under that bit."  
Business/Leisure, Older*



# Detailed review: What we will do if we don't get things right

- Bold statements, but because of the trust passengers have in c2c already, not unbelievable
  - Again, could be condensed for easier reading.

Little notice taken of the link to the Passenger Charter

Perception that it would say the same thing but in more detail

*"I thought it would say the same as what they just said, because there's quite a lot of words in here, so I just assumed it's going to say the same."  
Business/Leisure, Older*

Shorter URL link to access it

Some specific examples desired e.g. what will you do if services are cancelled on Christmas Eve etc

## What we will do if we don't get things right

**In this report we make a number of commitments. We promise to keep you updated on our progress and let you know how we have performed against each one. We will be comprehensive in our approach:**

- If we haven't been able to do something we will tell you why, and then explain what we are going to do instead.
- If we are missing our targets we will tell you so, and inform you of our plans for how we are going to get back on track.

We want your journey to be excellent every time you travel with us, but we know that sometimes things can go wrong. When they do, we will address these problems as quickly as we can. Our Passenger's Charter, a copy of which can be found on our website at [www.c2c-online.co.uk/customer-care/passengers-charter/index](http://www.c2c-online.co.uk/customer-care/passengers-charter/index) or from any station, sets out our fair compensation policy.

There are two main ways we find out about problems – either we spot them, or you tell us! We monitor our performance by analysing large amounts of data; from on-train systems to customer surveys, from service quality results to direct feedback from our people.

But, we can't always see everything. So please tell us of any issues you come across when using our services. No one knows better than you when things aren't right or what we could do to improve.

There is a section at the end of this report entitled "getting in touch". You can let us know about any issues through c2c Live, online, by phone, through Twitter or by telling a member of staff.

No matter how you contact us we will:

- Acknowledge your comment or feedback within one working day; and
- Respond to 95% of customer contacts within five working days
- We commit to responding to the remainder within ten working days, as sometimes we need a little more time to investigate the issues raised.

You can track your comment or feedback online through c2c Live. This will show you when we receive it, when it is allocated for a response, and which team is dealing with your issue. It is important to us to demonstrate that we are taking your feedback seriously and acting on it or to explain the reasons why we are unable to accept a suggestion you have made

All your comments will be recorded and used to influence improvements to the service we offer.

Could be condensed and more to the point

Commit to responding to all customer complaints – doubtful that many other train companies would do this

More information desired about refunds

*"It's quite good, it's quite bold of them to say anything. But they can because they're such a good service. You know so there's a lot of substance to them being able to say something like that."  
Business/Leisure, Older*



# Detailed review: Our approach to data

- Relevance of information not understood and passengers unclear how this level of data will assist them
- Expected to appear in a longer version of the Customer Report or in an Appendix.

Most admitted to 'skipping' this page and struggling to see the relevance

*"Yeah it's to be like the nitty gritty stuff, which most of the general person won't want to know or understand."  
Commuter, Younger*

Viewed as the 'small print' that you might expect in an appendix or longer version of the document

*"That's been plonked in the middle of the booklet. Should be at the back somewhere."  
Commuter, Younger*

## Our approach to data

Before we plunge into the detail we think it is worth setting out how we use data in this document. We are providing a snapshot of the data available, but we can supply more information on request if you want to know more.

### Our data policy is to:

- Present results in simple and easy to understand formats;
  - Minimise adjustments or complex statistical analysis so that the data is the best reflection of customers experience of our services;
  - Make as much data as possible available to stakeholders and customers, whilst respecting customer privacy, staff confidentiality, and safety issues;
  - Provide up-to-date data wherever possible; and
  - Allow others to analyse our data and draw their own conclusions.
- Simply put, all non-confidential data will be available to you. We will not hide anything; we will tell you everything.
- If you want access to more data, we are developing a portal dedicated to allowing you access to our datasets – please just ask. You can contact us via the "Getting in touch" page at the back of this report.

Displays confidence in what they are producing and creates positive impression that nothing is being hidden. Hard to imagine other companies doing something similar

*"It must be from the confidence they have and what success they've had that they're able to do that."  
Commuter, Younger*

Positioning in report confusing. Should be positioned after 'our plans for c2c' if included at all



# Detailed review: Our plans for c2c

- One of the most interesting and informative pages of the report
  - Consequently, should appear closer to the beginning of the report, perhaps after the 'welcome message'.

Well signposted and categorised by section

Succinct and bullet-points make for easy reading

*"It gives you a breakdown on how they're spending their money like how they go about improving and things like that. It's telling you, how they're going to spend their money and what their aims are."  
Commuter, Younger*

Fails to address passengers main concern: cost of travel. (Explained in more detail on the next page)

## Our plans for c2c

### Over the next 15 years we will be investing heavily to improve our stations and trains.

Before we set out some of the highlights, here are some initiatives that you may have already noticed:

- c2c Live – your new website and mobile app. If you haven't already downloaded it, visit the App Store or Play Store now
- New c2c Smartcards
- Free WiFi at stations.

And there is a lot more to come in future:

#### Our train service

- A new timetable from December 2015 providing extra capacity for our customers in each peak time period, and better connections
- A new way of reporting the performance of our train service, measuring trains which arrive within one minute of the scheduled time
- Monitoring of right-time performance at all stations.

#### Ticketing

- Contactless credit/debit card payment in the London Travelcard area, with extension to the whole of our route by December 2017
- New fare options, such as discounted prices for advance purchase and special rates for student and senior fares.

#### At stations

- Staffing from first train to last at all our stations by July 2017
- £33m for station enhancements across the life of our franchise including:
  - Step-free access from street to train at all stations
  - Implementation of our innovative smart station with new ticket buying facilities and information screens
- £5.3m to transform Barking Station by September 2017
- £1.6m at Fenchurch Street to improve the layout of the station
- £7.2m invested in new information systems at stations to include new screens

- Secure Station Information Areas
- New summary of departure boards
- 180 additional car park spaces.

#### On our trains

- We will retain the popular current fleet of trains for the duration of the franchise
- We will refurbish all of our trains by December 2016 with new interiors, enhanced CCTV and smart-train capability
- Introduce free WiFi on our trains by December 2016
- Order 17 brand new trains, with delivery starting from 2019.

#### Customer service

- Introduce our new Passenger's Charter with enhanced customer promises and protections
- Introduction of a new delay repay compensation policy
- A new customer service training programme for all staff and managers.

#### Safety and security

- Fund a dedicated British Transport Police team for the c2c route from March 2015
- Invest over £1.1m on CCTV cameras and build a new state-of-the-art CCTV control centre
- Achieve Secure Stations Accreditation at all of our stations by November 2015 and retain it for the duration of the franchise
- Achieve Park Mark accreditation for all car parks by November 2015 and retain it for the duration of the franchise.

#### Customer and Communities Improvement Fund

- From 2017 we will introduce a new fund with money set aside for improvements determined by our customers and stakeholders with approval by the Department for Transport
- We will tell you each year how the projects are progressing and what money has been spent.

As you can see, we have ambitious plans to make c2c an even better railway than it is today.

Should appear earlier on in the booklet as is one of the most important and informative parts

Some repetition in what has already been said on the first page

*"I think it's quite an important page, but again it should be right after the second or the third page, and once again the financial information is repeated, so they can take that off. They already talked about it on page two so they didn't have to repeat that again."  
Commuter, Younger*



# Our plans for c2c: A lack of information about cost causes uncertainty

- Unlike their perceptions on the majority of the report, passengers are left feeling underwhelmed and almost disappointed after reading the section 'our plans for c2c'
- The reason for this is that the section doesn't address passengers' main concern – ticketing and cost of travel
- Passengers want detailed information on future price rises and solid commitments that they can hold c2c to
- Because of this lack of detail, passengers are sceptical as to 'what might be around the corner' and predict further price increases in the new year
  - Particularly as some of the other sections e.g. 'At stations' goes into detail about the amount being spent and time periods
- Passengers desire pre-warning about price rises, even if it does make for tough reading, so that they can prepare.

*"I don't think it's generally addressing anything, what they do have in there about ticketing is quite specific to sort of students."  
Business/Leisure, Older*

*"In fact they're so vague on there, we probably will end up paying for all of these improvements in our ticket fares."  
Commuter, Younger*

*"I'm sure there's lots and lots of things, they can improve: stair free access, car parks, all of these bits, but the main thing is value and I can't help feeling that they're kind of skirting over the value side of things throughout the whole brochure."  
Commuter, Younger*



# Our plans for c2c: Other plans laid out are informative (in the most part) and considered achievable

- As well as more information about cost, passengers identify improvements across the other commitments:

<i>Area</i>	<i>Improvements</i>
Our train service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>A note that more information on the new timetable can be found on page 10</li></ul>
At stations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>A lot invested into one station (Barking), information on reasoning and areas of improvement desired</li><li>Information on spread of where new information boards and car parking spaces will occur</li></ul>
On our trains	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Information on specific improvements that will be seen on the re-furbished trains</li><li>An explanation as to what 'smart-train capability' is</li></ul>
Customer service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Information on how the new delay-repayment scheme will be better than the existing one and a timescale for this</li></ul>
Safety and security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Higher expectations for the amount of reduction in ASB crimes (as listed later on in the report), as a result of the improvements listed</li></ul>
Customer and communities improvement fund	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Information on the amount being invested</li></ul>

- Passengers have no real doubts that c2c will meet the commitments set out
  - What has been set out is seen as realistic and achievable and concentrates on the short-term (mostly 2015-2017 targets)
- Moreover, passengers have no reason to believe that c2c will not meet targets given that they have rarely been let down by the TOC previously.



# Detailed review: Customer Experience

- Results are considered a fair reflection of the c2c service and entirely believable, particularly as survey conducted by an independent body
  - Some surprise that the results aren't even higher.

Sceptical about some of the promises

*"Well the fact that they're saying we want the most reliable railway in the world is pretty amazing. Especially as they're not German! Or Japanese!"  
Business/Leisure, Older*

Those that understood the reporting of train arrivals were impressed with the results

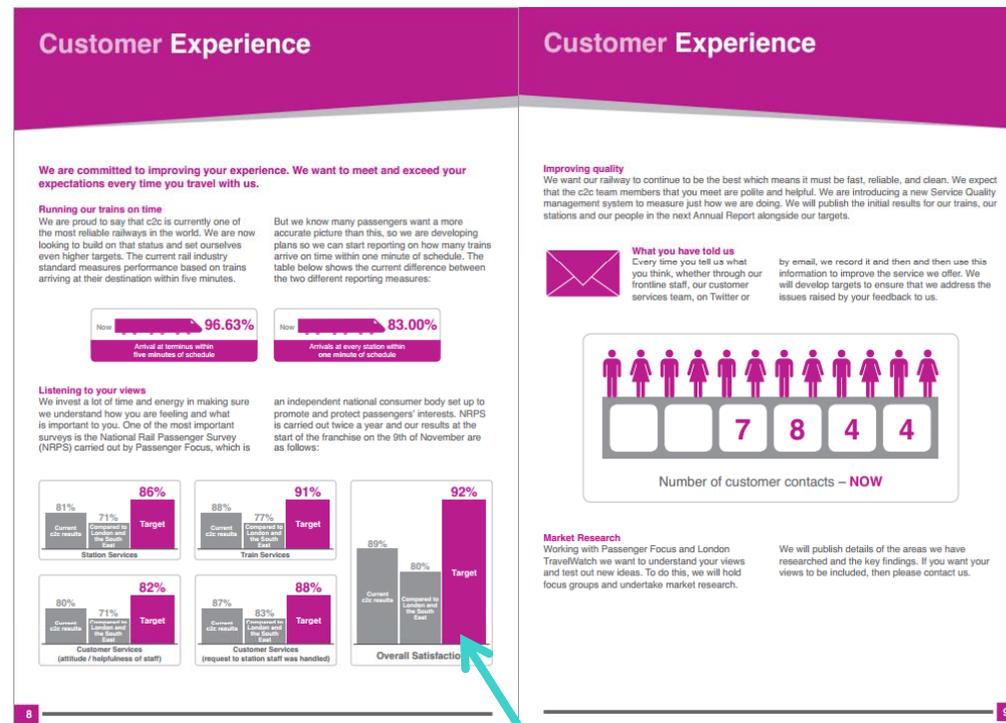
More information desired on the period when the figures were collected e.g. over weeks, months or years?

Bar charts are favoured as they are clear in what they are communicating, but they are not representative of the numbers they are displaying e.g. size of 92% bar almost double that of 89% bar

Lots of talk about contact, but no contact details

Purpose of displaying and meaning of 'number of customer contacts' unclear

Impression that results can be trusted as independent body measuring





# Detailed review: Growth and Value

- Similar to the 'Our plans...' page, passengers feel this section (particularly the timetable proposals) is understated
  - Communicates important and worthwhile information that should appear nearer the beginning of the report.

Passengers drawn towards the 'highlights' section

A lot of emphasis put on the time-table – strikes as an important future development, that some (commuters) had already heard about

Uncertainty about 'cost per passenger.' Unsure as to what it means and how it is calculated

Though another example of transparency and honesty

**Growth and Value**

We are committed to growing the value and reputation of c2c as a successful rail business.

Passenger numbers will grow year on year but we will maintain the high quality of our services.

We understand that more passengers travelling means more capacity will be required. To achieve this, we are developing a new timetable for introduction in December 2015. This will be one of the most noticeable changes we will make in the new franchise and is designed to tackle two of the biggest issues for our customers; overcrowding and connections with other services.

**Highlights of our 2015 Timetable proposals include:**

- More capacity at the busiest times and the busiest stations
- Every train stopping at Barking, West Ham and Limehouse, to create a metro-style service
- Four trains per hour minimum at every station during peak times
- Faster off-peak journey times to and from London
- More frequent late evening services
- Earlier first trains and later last services
- Two trains per hour on Saturday and Sunday to Stratford and Liverpool Street
- A new direct service from Rainham and Purfleet into Fenchurch Street on Sundays.

**These proposals will increase peak capacity on our services as follows:**

Service	Now	From Dec 2015
Peak Capacity AM	36,576	41,420
Peak Capacity PM	34,556	41,614

**9.86p**  
Cost per passenger km

We recognise the importance of the changes to the timetable and we have put a lot of thought in developing what we consider to be the best timetable to meet the needs of all of our customers. To make sure we don't miss out on the all the issues that might influence our final decision, we are carrying out a public consultation. We want to hear as many views from as many of our customers as possible.

From 2019 we will increase capacity further with the introduction of new trains. We also aim to deliver excellent value for money. We do not want to spend any more money than we have to, and we want to keep fares as low as possible. We are always looking for ways to reduce our costs. We will continue to reduce our cost per passenger kilometre and let you know how we are doing on this.

*"I read this time thing because I'm taking part in this research, but had I not been, I'd probably have stopped reading by now. But it wasn't a bother to read this page because it was interesting."*  
Commuter, Younger

*"That's what is relevant to me though that bit, and the highlights and 2015. To me that was quite good, because there's new trains going from Rainham and Purfleet, so that's great."*  
Commuter, Younger

More information desired about specific timetable additions and changes – perhaps accessible on the internet with a link in the report to direct to this



# Detailed review: Sustainability and Community (1)

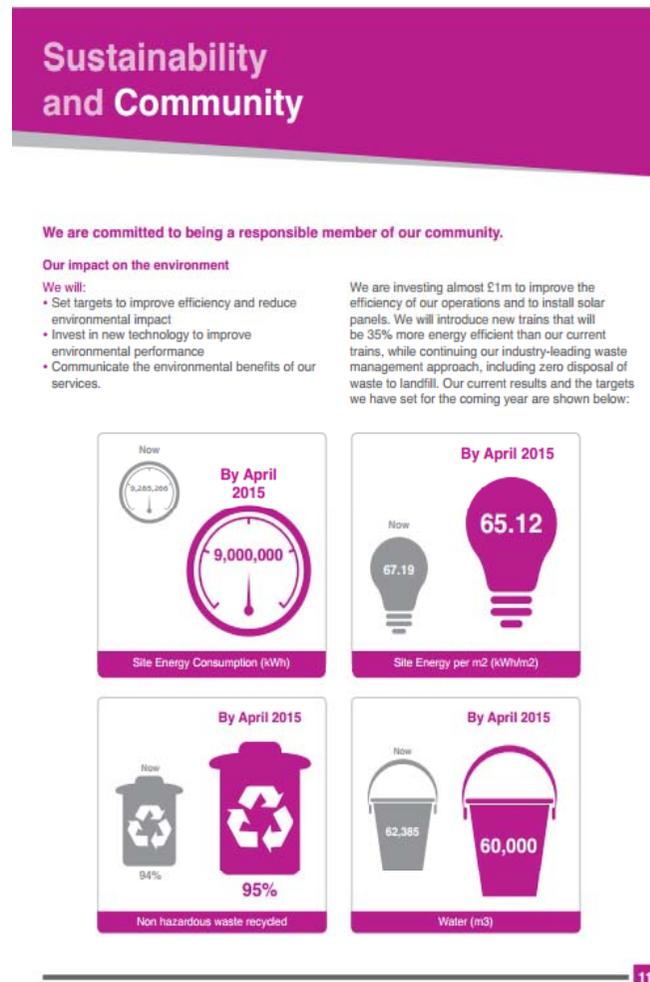
- Commuters in particular do not feel that this page is needed as it does not directly influence them
  - Communication of the data comes under scrutiny in terms of its presentation and the measures used.

Representation of numbers not accurate

- Infographics becoming larger even when number is decreasing
- Infographics not proportionate to number they are displaying e.g. 9m displayed much larger than 9.3m

*"Yeah, it's not that I'm not interested in it because I'm bored of reading it, it's just like, ugh I haven't got time to be worrying about the environment at this point. I just have to get to work, yeah."  
Commuter, Younger*

*"It's almost you expect it to be in there but you're not going to pay much attention to it."  
Commuter, Younger*



Use of pictures/infographics liked and preferred to pie charts/bar charts

Measures used are confusing e.g. kWh/m2. Should be communicated in layman's terms

Timescales could be longer e.g. over 2/3 years, in order to make the improvements look more impressive

*"But it's only over a four or five month period, I think they should have a longer time scale on that."  
Business/Leisure, Older*



# Detailed review: Sustainability and Community (2)

- A pleasant surprise at the content of this page, with both Commuters and Business/Leisure passengers unaware of the contribution c2c make to the community.

Liked the use of real-life pictures, but feel that more could be utilised to further communicate the points made

*"It could be more visual as well. Like a picture there so you can see where it is."  
Commuter, Younger*

**Sustainability and Community**

**Our place in the community**

As a local train service, we know it is important that we play our part in the wider local community. Many of our staff live on the route and play an active part in helping causes such as raising money for local charities, providing rail safety messages to local schools and promoting rail travel for disabled groups (our Try a Train event), schools and community groups.

At a company level, the National Express Foundation is open for applications from local community groups who are focused on helping young people and building engagement within the local community. This year we awarded £2,500 to each of the following local community groups in the c2c area:

- The **Arc Theatre in Dagenham** for a summer workshop programme exploring anti-social behaviour issues through video and performance
- **Saint Stephen's Church in Southend** to fund and equip their youth football teams for children aged 10-13
- The **B'3 Foundation in Newham** to run a seven-week media and film course for local NEETS, helping to build their media and interpersonal skills
- **South East and Central Essex Mind**, based in Southend, to support five Southend students with 13 mental health counselling sessions, plus run youth focus groups for up to 25 local students.
- The **Green Shoes Arts community interest company in Dagenham** to run a creative leadership challenge for 15 local young people
- More information on the National Express Foundation can be found at [www.nationalexpressgroup.com/foundation](http://www.nationalexpressgroup.com/foundation)
- The **Helping Hands Job Club in Lee Chapel North**, Basildon to run additional job club sessions for local 16-24 year-olds

**The following are some examples of our involvement with local communities -**

We teamed up with local cubs from Thurrock Thameside Orion Scouts to design the best posters for promoting railway safety. Their efforts were judged by c2c's local station managers and the winning designs are now being displayed across the c2c network.

This summer we organised a free outing for 650 members of the Fleede Road Tenants and Residents' Association, based in Barking and Dagenham, for the fourth successive year. The group travelled on their own private train from east London to Southend, where families enjoyed an afternoon shopping, playing on the beach and visiting the fun park.

Business/Leisure passengers in particular felt this page was interesting and surprised that c2c contributed so much to the community

Displays a 'softer side' of c2c

*"Yeah a bit at the bottom about for the fourth year running we're taking the people on the train, they have the whole train, going to the sea side, and that's really nice, that's good community spirit."  
Business/Leisure, Older*



# Detailed review: Leadership and People/Business Excellence

- Interesting but inconsequential pages for passengers
  - All admitted to 'skimming' these pages and taking little out from them.

Investors in people award further helps to make passengers value the service that c2c provide

Some surprised that this didn't receive more attention

*"I thought they would have made a bigger thing about them getting the Investors In People, because I didn't realise they had that."*  
Commuter, Younger

### Leadership and People

c2c employs over 592 people.

We are committed to investing in and developing them. This year our employees have attended over 700 training days. In the first year of the franchise all frontline facing staff will attend a two day customer service training and all managers will attend a one day customer service training workshop.

We are committed to increasing the skill levels of all our frontline people - one level every five years. We will use the Qualifications Credit Framework (formerly NVQs) as a way of recognising skills and qualifications to enable learners to gain qualifications at their own pace via a flexible route.

We run an annual employee survey to measure the level of engagement of our people. Our target for the coming year is as follows:

Now	By April 2015
745	755

### Business Excellence

c2c are committed to continuous improvement in service performance and quality. We will continuously benchmark ourselves and seek external validation and accreditation.

**Key achievements**  
We have been recognised for:

We will seek to win an Excellence award reflecting our performance by 2020.

**Awards**

c2c has been recognised by our peers in the railway industry for the quality of the service we provide.

We were Highly Commended in the 2014 Rail Business Awards and finalists in the 2014 National Rail Awards, both in the best train operator category.

Also c2c Station Manager Julie Davis won the "Outstanding Personal Achievement" award at the National Rail Awards, while Thorpe Bay was Highly Commended as "Best Small Station" at the same awards.

**We also hold the following quality marks:**

**NOW**

**45**

Take up of Qualifications

**Female**

**23**

**Male**

**77**

13 14

More information desired about how gender splits by job role e.g. drivers versus office staff

*"I didn't really see what relevance it is, to put, you know, about the equal opportunity, male or female."*  
Business/Leisure, Older



# Detailed review: Safety

- Of little interest to most, reassuring in places, but does not need to be communicated in so much detail.

Reduction in crime rate trivial because of the small amount

*"They are planning to reduce it by five. Is that a million or a thousand?"  
Commuter, Younger*

## Safety

**We are committed to keeping you safe and our investment in stations will make them even safer.**  
The impact of our operations on customers is shown below:

**Now**  
2.16  
Reported Accidents (per million passenger journeys)

**By April 2015**

**Now** 305  
**By April 2015** 300  
ASB Crimes per year

**Ensuring that you feel safe and secure is very important to c2c.**  
We will reduce instances of Anti-Social Behaviour Crimes (defined as violence, public order, robbery, criminal damage and graffiti offences).

**A dedicated CCTV control room**

- Staffed at all times
- Provide real-time monitoring of all Stations
- Remote monitoring on trains.

**Secure Stations and Park Mark**  
All 25 c2c-managed stations are accredited as Secure Stations.

**This means:**

- The station design conforms to security standards
- We have policies and structures in place to prevent crimes
- Respond to incidents, and communicate effectively with you
- The station's crime statistics for the 12 months prior to inspection show we are managing crime effectively
- Passengers feel secure using the station, through a passenger perceptions survey.

Six of our car parks are already recognised with the Park Mark as secure car parks.  
To achieve this a car park has to be vetted by the British Transport Police and have measures in place to create a safer environment, including:

- Appropriate lighting
- Effective surveillance
- A clean environment.

**P**

CCTV gives an impression of safety and security. Reassuring that all stations are monitored

No aspirations for the number of reported accidents

*"We assume that they don't think that they're going to get any better than that."  
Business/Leisure, Older*



# Detailed review: Getting in touch

- Contact details should appear earlier on in the booklet, but are also useful on the back page for ease of access.

*"I think it should come a bit earlier on really. But leave it on the back as well."  
Business/Leisure, Older*

## Getting in touch

**We want to hear from you and we have made it as easy as possible for you to contact us for all your needs or to receive your feedback.**

Visit any of our stations and talk to our staff. They will be happy to deal with your issue there and then. If they cannot they will pass your comments onto someone who can.

c2c Live is our digital solution for all your travel information and service needs. From March 2015 it will be enabled so you can give us your feedback simply by pressing the "feedback" button.

[c2c-online.co.uk](http://c2c-online.co.uk) is our website and we also have a mobile friendly version to use with your smartphone. Here you can find information on your journey, buying tickets, how we are doing and other general information. To get in touch simply visit [c2c-online.co.uk/feedback](http://c2c-online.co.uk/feedback)

Our Customer Relations Team is available from 0800 to 2000 Monday to Friday and 0900 to 1600 on Saturdays and Sundays (except Christmas and Boxing Day when we will be closed).

You can reach them by:

 **Email:** [contact@c2crail.co.uk](mailto:contact@c2crail.co.uk)

 **Phone:** 03457 44 44 22

 Customer Relations Team,  
c2c Rail Limited,  
FREEPOST ADM3968,  
Southend, SS1 1ZS

Follow [@c2c\\_rail](https://twitter.com/c2c_rail) on Twitter or visit our Facebook page – just search for [c2c rail](#)

Information should come further forward in the booklet – possibly after Julian Drury welcome message

Surprised not to see a twitter handle as a form of contact



# Detailed review: c2c poster

- Before the poster was shown, some spontaneously mentioned using a poster to communicate the key points of the report
- The poster is liked by passengers as it provides a snapshot of the key themes
- Can be read in a couple of minutes as a shortened version of the Customer Report
- Passengers see the poster as versatile and used to communicate the key messages through multiple channels:
  - Displayed at the station
  - Handed out at the station
  - Displayed on the train
  - On the App or website
  - In the newspaper e.g. Metro/Evening Standard.

*"Or maybe even an app. It is like a condensed version of the full report, so you can quickly go to it, to see what interests you."*  
Commuter, Younger

*"You're on the phone or you just gaze out of the window or something, and yeah you could have it somewhere in the carriage."*  
Business/Leisure, Older

*"I mean on an e-mail it would certainly help with all the high points and stuff."*  
Business/Leisure, Older

*"You could put it in the Metro."*  
Business/Leisure, Older





# Reactions after seeing the GTR Customer Report

Following the critique of the c2c Customer Report, we asked passengers to view the GTR report. They were given 5 minutes within the reconvened group to read GTR's version

- After seeing GTR's Customer Report, passengers can identify several examples of things that GTR deliver better than c2c

## Content

- Detailed schedule of what improvements will be made and exact dates for when these will occur
- More information on costs and ticketing

Deadline date	Commitment	Route/station
Sept 2014	Introduce a new customer app	All
Nov 2014	Make information on the number of passenger on trains available on app and station posters	All
From 30 Nov 2014	Hold Meet the Manager events every four weeks	London terminals and other major stations
21 Dec 2014	Successfully manage the integration of some Southeastern services and seven stations into the new franchise	Thameslink (Kent route)
Dec 2014	Successfully manage the major timetable change caused by the partial closure of London Bridge station	Thameslink
31 Mar 2015	Introduce YourVoice on our website	All
26 July 2015	Successfully manage the integration of Southern and Gatwick Express services and stations into the franchise	Southern & Gatwick Express
July 2015	Start Keep Trains Tidy marketing campaign	All
July 2015	Start an online passenger panel of at least 1,000 passengers	All
July 2015	Start Priority Seat awareness campaign	All
By Sept 2015	Introduce all day staffing at 25 more stations: Alexandra Palace, City Thameslink, Cockfosters, Egham & Castle, Epsom & Borehamwood, Enfield Chase, Finsbury Park, Gordon Hill, Harpenden, Haringey, Harfield, Herts, Hornsey, Huntingdon, Leagrave, Leighton Garden City, Loughborough Junction, Mill Hill Broadway, New Barnet, Palmers Green, Ponders End, Radlett, Tooting, West Hampstead Thameslink and Winchmore Hill	Thameslink and Great Northern
From Sept 2015	Hold an annual conference with local stakeholders	All

*"I like the calendar the way they're doing it like this with the deadline, what they're doing when. It would be quite good to have that."*  
Commuter, Younger

*"This one [GTR] has got a more clearer font, more spaces. It's just more clearer and much more approaching and very nice to read through. This [c2c] is a bit too small and a bit too close."*  
Commuter, Younger

## Presentation

- Easier reading, as a result of
  - Less text and better use of bullet points
  - Larger font and more spacing in between lines and paragraphs
- Visually more appealing due to more real-life pictures.

- 115 new Siemens Class 700 trains (1,140 carriages in total) for Thameslink routes between 2016 and 2018, many will be 12 carriages long
  - 25 new Metro trains (six carriages each) for Moorgate services in 2018, replacing 40-year-old trains
  - 27 new trains (four carriages each) for Gatwick Express by 2016 that will be easier to get on and off, with free wi-fi
- In addition, we will run newer, air-conditioned Class 377 trains on the Cambridge and Kings Lynn route by 2017.





# Improving the customer report (1)

<i>Section</i>	<i>Content</i>	<i>Presentation</i>	<i>Improvements</i>	<i>Stay or go</i>
Front cover	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Picture clearer in depicting passengers using the train</li><li>• Some explanation as to what 'Customer Report' means</li></ul>	Stay
A welcome message from the Managing Director	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fewer words to make the task of reading not so daunting – use of bullet-points where possible</li><li>• Paragraphs signposted to make for easier navigation around the page</li><li>• Contact details for c2c</li></ul>	Stay
Britain's Best Railway	✗	✗	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Increase relevance of information for the passenger</li><li>• Incorporate this information into another page if necessary</li></ul>	Go
What we will do if we don't get things right	✓	✗	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Text more condensed and headings utilised for sign-posting</li><li>• Shorter URL link to access Passenger Charter</li></ul>	Stay
Our approach to data	✗	✗	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Communicate importance and relevance of this section to passengers</li><li>• Rename to communicate honesty, transparency and availability of data</li><li>• Re-locate section in the report – perhaps towards the back</li></ul>	?
Our plans for c2c	✗	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• More information on costs and ticketing</li><li>• More detailed information about improvements (in places)</li><li>• Timelines for all improvements</li><li>• Should appear further towards the beginning of the report</li><li>• Sign-posting on where further information can be found about any of the improvements e.g. further on in the report or on-line</li></ul>	Stay



## Improving the customer report (2)

<i>Section</i>	<i>Content</i>	<i>Presentation</i>	<i>Improvements</i>	<i>Stay or go</i>
Customer Experience	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Period that data is collected over</li><li>• Results from previous year(s)</li><li>• Clarification as to what 'customer contacts' are</li></ul>	Stay
Growth and value	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Should appear nearer the beginning of the report</li><li>• More information on meaning of cost per passenger and how it is calculated</li></ul>	Stay
Sustainability and Community (1)	✓	✗	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Infographics representative of the size of the number</li><li>• Clarification on the measures used e.g. kWh/m<sup>2</sup></li><li>• Longer timescales to make improvements look more significant</li></ul>	Stay
Sustainability and Community (2)	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• More 'real-life' pictures</li></ul>	Stay
Leadership and People	✗	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reduce amount of space the section occupies, append, or make available on the internet for further reading</li><li>• Information on breakdown of genders by job title</li></ul>	Go
Safety	✗	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reduce amount of space the section occupies, append, or make available on the internet for further reading</li><li>• Reduction in ASB crimes insignificant – longer term targets desired</li><li>• Information on reduction in number of reported accidents</li></ul>	Go
Getting in touch	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Contact details to appear nearer to the beginning of report</li></ul>	Stay

# Change in attitude towards TOC as a result of Customer Report



# Limited emotional engagement felt towards c2c

- Prior to seeing the Customer Report, passengers felt limited emotional engagement towards c2c, despite having a positive view of the service
- This is primarily due to:
  - The name 'c2c' doesn't mean anything – “don't even know what it stands for”
  - There is no 'face' or personality to the brand
  - Difficult to relate to them – “they're just a train service, nothing else”
- They cite Virgin Trains as the brand that they have most affiliation and relationship with
- Passengers identify ways that c2c could improve the relationship between themselves and the passenger:

## **Create a brand identity**

- More striking, energetic branding
- Increase media presence
- A figurehead that people can associate with the brand

## **Reward for Loyalty**

- Loyalty schemes
- Vouchers for days out/future travel

## **Updates about the service**

- Free magazines
- Poster campaigns

- Having said this, passengers are prepared to trust c2c, are not hostile towards the TOC and hence are open to listening to their commitments and reading the Customer Report



# Customer Report has mixed impact on passengers' feelings towards c2c

- For the most part, the Customer Report adds to the trust passengers have in c2c
- Moreover, passengers acknowledge that c2c do attempt to enhance the emotional engagement:
  - Providing information on aspects such as c2c ownership
  - Information on who is in charge, i.e. Julian Drury
- However, this is overshadowed by the lack of detail the report provides in terms of future plans for the network
- And in particular their concerns around cost of travel
  - Passengers even question whether c2c are 'hiding' something
  - Speculating that this could be the only reason why they do not provide any more information around the subject of value for money
- Because of the level of trust passengers feel towards c2c, the TOC could do more to be upfront with their passengers, even if that does mean delivering 'bad' news from time to time.

*"It's a mixed bag for me because on the first read, yes, and then because there's so many crucial points that they miss, I think that they don't have the time or they don't produce the figures because they don't know. Are they being cunning and so therefore there is a very mixed bag for me because I don't where they're sitting."*

*Commuter, Older*

*"Yeah, I mean again it's something that is not going to blow you away. It's something that, you know, I can either live with it or without it. So it's quite nice I guess."*

*Business/Leisure, Younger*



## Passengers' messages to Julian Drury are positive but request further information about fares

*Good luck, keep it up and carry on doing what your are doing.*

*How are the fares going to increase?*

*I'd like to see more information on the price of tickets over the next few years.*

*I hope you don't become complacent and continue to deliver a good service.*

*Good service, keep up the good work.*

*You should be proud.*

*Congratulations, you are making your customers proud.*

*Don't put your prices up!*

# Summary and Conclusions



# Customer Report is received well by passengers, but one key area of concern exists

- Passengers are extremely positive about their experiences of travelling with c2c
  - The only real improvements that they desire is around value for money, consisting of factors such as cheaper fares, introduction of a loyalty scheme and better provision and choice of tickets
  - Other improvements are limited and non-essential
- Overall, passengers are largely positive about the c2c Customer Report
  - This is within the context of passengers' good relationship with c2c and their experiences with c2c being largely positive
  - Content and presentation is acceptable, with little objection as to what is set out
- However, the report does not sufficiently address passengers key area of concern: value for money
  - Because of this omission, passengers are left feeling underwhelmed whilst some accuse c2c of hiding the truth
  - This affects the extent to which passengers positively rate the content and credibility of the customer report



# Addressing fares and value for money would position the report much more positively

## Content:

- ✓ Informative and interesting to read
- ✓ Information communicated using appropriate terms
- ✓ Messages, on the whole, delivered quickly and succinctly
- ✗ Lacks information on the only real pain point for customers (value for money and cost)



- More information on cost of travel
- Commitments that focus on offering improved value for money

## Presentation:

- ✓ Colours liked; pink striking and eye-catching
- ✓ Recognisable and consistent with other c2c produced material
- ✗ Lengthy - 10 pages considered optimum
- ✗ Too much white space in places – close up
- ✗ Dense text - bullet points to be utilised more
- ✗ Graphics not proportionate to the number they are displaying – more representative
- ✗ Fewer icons - more 'real life' pictures



- Shorten the length of the document
- Streamline text for manageable reading
- Better, more varied use of graphics

## Distribution:

- ✗ No knowledge of existence of the report, though perhaps influenced by timing of research
- ✗ Limited channels it is available through



- Make available through more channels e.g. multi-media
- Posters to communicate key points

## Credibility:

- ✓ Passengers optimistic and trust the promises c2c set out as a result of their existing positive impression of the TOC
- ✗ Lack of information about fares causes passengers to question integrity.



- Information and openness about fares, regardless of whether this is good or bad news



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