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Mike Gallop (Route MD, Western Route)  
Mark Hopwood (GWR MD)  
Steve Murphy (MTR MD)  
Via email

23 October 2019

AS/2019/066

Dear Mike, Mark, Steve,

### **December timetable change**

My colleague Nina Howe has been keeping me informed about preparations for the timetable change in December.

There is clearly a huge amount of work being done within your organisations to ensure the orderly implementation of the timetable changes and it is encouraging to hear about the significant levels of collaboration. We are grateful for the open engagement from you and your staff in response to our questions and challenges.

The new timetable clearly delivers huge improvements for passengers, with more frequent trains and greater capacity – and of course new trains. But as you are all well aware, all this good work will be undermined if trains do not run on time and there are cancellations.

Now that we have had the opportunity to see the industry's performance modelling, Transport Focus must put on record its continuing concern about the predicted dip in performance – a situation which may cause passengers to question whether the new timetable is an improvement at all. That would be very disappointing given the level of investment made and disruption passengers have put up with to get to this point.

In addition to our concerns about the underlying level of performance post 15 December, the appendix to my letter sets out a number of areas of risk that we are aware of and which passengers would expect the industry to have resolved before the timetable is implemented.

I should be grateful for your reassurance that if performance is not as good as it is now the industry will take prompt steps to recover the situation. I should also be grateful for your assurance that the risks set out in the appendix to this letter will be addressed between now and 15 December.

Yours sincerely

A. J. C. SP

Anthony Smith  
Chief executive

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a long horizontal stroke with a small loop at the end.

Encl.

## **Appendix**

### **1. Stations**

Stations will be critical to delivery of right time departures through effective platform management and other activities, such as splitting and joining of trains. Will the key elements of station operations be rehearsed so that they are second nature come 15 December?

### **2 Heathrow Express**

The change to single platform operation for Heathrow Express at Paddington has both performance and customer experience implications. Will the new operation be rehearsed ahead of 15 December so that teams are comfortable with managing both the performance and passenger management implications?

### **3. Train crew**

Will there be sufficient trains and crew, and will the detailed process of agreeing diagrams and rostering with staff representatives be completed in time? Does this include weekends? We note that Chris Gibb has highlighted the relative inexperience of MTR drivers and the support they may need if there is significant disruption in the early weeks. What steps are being taken before 15 December to mitigate this risk?

### **4. Service recovery**

It is important that new, robust service recovery plans are agreed before 15 December and involve a high degree of collaboration between the three parties. Passenger information must be timely, accurate and useful. What steps are being taken now to ensure Control and customer service functions are fully resourced come 15 December and prepared for the first major disruption that occurs after the timetable has been implemented?

### **5. Infrastructure**

A number of changes to infrastructure maintenance regimes have been identified as key to the success of the new timetable. Will these be addressed by 15

