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Your ref: AS/2019/077

Dear Anthony,

DISRUPTION ON RURAL ROUTES AND INFORMED TRAVELLER T-12

Thank you for your letter of 11 December 2019 concerning the disruption to our rural routes and Informed Traveller T-12.

We are very sorry for the problems our customers and local communities have suffered, most notably from Friday 6 December to Sunday 15 December. We know that our customers have been let down and it is very clear to us that the delays and cancellations have been extremely detrimental to those who rely on our service.

The issues affecting our regional train services in Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire were caused by problems with parts of the signalling system. We have been working very closely with Network Rail, who have carried out thorough investigations and safety-checks across the affected routes. All issues with the infrastructure needed to be reviewed, alongside the effect of weather conditions on railheads and the interface between the tracks and wheels on both old and new trains. There was however no indication from these exhaustive tests that the trains themselves were the root cause of the issues.

While these investigations were taking place, precautionary measures were rightfully put in place, which included reducing the frequency of services to allow for thorough examinations of the infrastructure to take place.

Following this round-the-clock attention from both Network Rail and Greater Anglia engineers, we have reintroduced a normal service on all routes except for the Ipswich to Peterborough line. This is primarily due to the knock-on effect of the signalling problems on driver training and the programme for testing, commissioning and introducing the new trains. We are accelerating our training programme to make up for this lost time. Our current expectation is that the line will return to normal early January 2020. In the meantime, we have either implemented a reduced train service or used buses to replace any cancelled trains.

We know that our customers have suffered from this recent disruption and deeply regret the inconvenience caused to them by these challenges. We have prioritised the provision of information with regular Q&As posted on our website to answer customer concerns. For live service information, revised train and bus timetables have been listed on the website. Station-based staff have been kept briefed via frequent conference calls to ensure they can provide the most up-to-date information to customers.

Customers have been able to claim Delay Repay compensation for any disrupted journey, whilst our Customer Relations team have also considered individual claims and complaints based on each customer's circumstances. We will carry out a full post-incident review of this disruption, particularly once the final Ipswich to Peterborough route is back to normal running. As part of this review, we will evaluate what we can do to make further amends to our customers and restore their trust and confidence in our service.

Separately, we are working to further improve the performance of the new trains as we phase them in across our network. Although they have not been the root cause of the major disruption, there have been some teething issues with software, which we are working to address asap. Stadler have a special taskforce here in the UK tackling the issues and a programme of software updates and modifications will help to bring the new trains up to the high reliability standards they are planned to deliver.



In reply to your separate concern about Informed Traveller T-12, we have experienced some difficulty in meeting the timescales for submission. The biggest impact has been felt by the Christmas engineering blockade having had late changes made by both Network Rail and the Crossrail project. This had necessitated several last-minute major alterations to the amended train plan.

I can confirm that the weeks mentioned in your letter have now all been bid to Network Rail for processing and publication. As part of our Informed Traveller recovery plan agreed with Network Rail, these weeks have been prioritised for processing to reduce the impact on the customer. We are confident that bidding for future weeks will be within the Informed Traveller timescales.

In closing, I know that many of our customers will be frustrated by the level of service we have provided in recent weeks. We are however determined, with Network Rail, to ensure we prevent any reoccurrence of these issues and improve reliability. I am confident that when we complete the introduction of our new trains, customers and commerce across our region will benefit greatly from the many improvements they offer in terms of service quality.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me on this matter. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have further queries relating to this, or indeed any other rail matter.

Yours sincerely,



Jamie Burles
Managing Director

