

Public Note of Third Advisory Board Meeting

On 10th December 2018, the System Operator Advisory Board held its third meeting. We welcomed Nick Brown, as our new independent Chair, and Pier Eringa from ProRail in the Netherlands, as our non-GB System Operator representative.

The meeting began with a briefing and discussion on initial reflections on the final Glaister report into the May 2018 timetable change. The Advisory Board agreed that timetabling is a core deliverable for the whole rail industry – and as such, it is necessary for a whole industry effort to rebuild trust with our customers, and both passenger and freight end users. Within this, however, the Advisory Board reflected on being part of a complex industry and that it is key not to lose sight of accountability for different elements of the timetable process. In particular, the Advisory Board agreed that there is a need to establish clear timetabling accountability within the rail industry and that System Operator is in a strong position to lead on these discussions.

The Advisory Board had the opportunity to understand the high-level changes to our Strategic Business Plan and the transition to the CP6 Delivery Plan, focusing on outputs. Some of these changes have occurred as a consequence of a change in thinking within the industry within the past six months e.g. the need to provide budget for a core PMO team and for system integration expertise; but it is not currently agreed where this will formally sit within Network Rail. The Leadership Team highlighted that activity was already underway to recruit more people into capacity planning; to strengthen the plans for proposed capex improvement projects; and to engage further with customers and stakeholders.

The Advisory Board reflected on the need for a balanced scorecard used both for internal management of System Operator and as part of regulatory monitoring. This would be accompanied by an annual narrative, with the aim being to refresh the delivery plan on an annual basis. It was highlighted that there would be a need to prioritise the scorecard measures and the weightings associated in the next draft iteration.

The Advisory Board further discussed the need for improved customer advocacy, the results of which should feed in the next year's business plan. There is a clear need for both qualitative and quantitative measures in our future customer surveys, to open up dialogue, and that the timings of the surveys needs to change to accommodate this. As such, 2019 will have two opportunities for customer feedback in both February and September. It was also suggested that this could include qualitative survey techniques (e.g. face-to-face surveying), in addition to existing methods and to inform customers and stakeholders about the range of activity undertaken by the System Operator. The Board also reflected on the wider opportunities around technology to enhance both the process of timetabling and the ability to further optimise the network capability.

The Advisory Board bid farewell to Brian Etheridge, DfT, who is retiring prior to our next System Advisory Board, and look forward to welcoming Conrad Bailey as his successor.