



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

The Rt Hon Chris Grayling MP
Secretary of State for Transport
Department for Transport
Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London
SW1P 4DR

3 June 2018

Dear Secretary of State,

The significant and ongoing problems on the Thameslink, Southern and Great Northern rail networks over the past 12 days have affected hundreds of thousands of commuters across our constituencies. The abject failure of Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR) to deliver anything remotely close to a decent service resulted in 455 GTR services cancelled or delayed in just one day.

Many of us have been contacted by constituents who have been late for work, medical appointments or to meet their children due to train cancellations. This anger has only been worsened by poor communication between GTR and passengers regarding delays, with reports that GTR have known of cancellations hours before informing customers. There have been widespread reports of overcrowding on platforms and on trains, as well as significant issues faced by disabled passengers needing to travel.

We were pleased to hear from your office committing to meet with Members of Parliament representing communities affected by this disruption on Monday, 4th June. As you stated earlier this week, the disruption following these changes has been ‘wholly unsatisfactory’ and it is essential that this issue is resolved as soon as possible.

As representatives of constituencies served by GTR we urgently need to give clear assurances to our constituents that the Government is tackling this as a priority. We therefore ask that at our meeting on Monday you provide us with clear information on: how the situation was allowed to get to this point; what the department is doing right now to rectify this situation; and what plans the Government has in the longer term to resolve the many significant issues with this franchise.

In particular, we would be grateful if you could confirm whether your Department was aware that delays to the finalisation of the timetable changes had left just three weeks between Network Rail confirming the new timetables and the planned launch date, rather than the expected twelve weeks? If so, could you clarify why the Department did not encourage GTR to delay implementing the new timetable?

We remain committed to solving rail disruption as urgently as possible and ensuring that customers do not face such inconveniences in the future.

Sincerely,

Sarah Jones MP

Bim Afolami MP

Caroline Lucas MP

Ellie Reeves MP

Gavin Shuker MP

Helen Hayes MP

Rt Hon Joan Ryan MP

Lloyd Russell-Moyle MP

Marsha de Cordova MP

Mohammad Yasin MP

Rt Hon Sir Nicholas Soames MP

Peter Kyle MP

Rosie Duffield MP

Siobhain McDonagh MP

Stephen Lloyd MP

Steve Reed MP

Teresa Pearce MP

Tim Loughton MP

Rt Hon Tom Brake MP

Vicky Foxcroft MP