

Date of meeting: Wednesday 19th October 2022

Time: 18:30-20:00

Location: Virtual online meeting and Cutlers Court, London.

Attendees:

Passenger Panel members present:

Jill Allen-King
Chris Gorman
Bola Odunlami
Daniel Pepper

Train operator representation present:

Amandeep Sogi
Lucy Fish
Iain Palmer
Jay Bibby (BTP)
Savannah Lawrence (minute taker)

Agenda item 1 - Business Updates

- The Access for all scheme is a funding scheme from Network Rail to improve infrastructure at stations. This includes: lifts that are automatic and give an audible tone when the doors open and close, staircases and platform edges that have tactile warning surfaces, new ramps and footbridges with lowered handrails, open entrances and new ticket gates and accessible waiting rooms and toilets.
- Currently we are running this scheme at four stations; Chalkwell, Southend East, Grays and Ockendon.
- We are currently looking into getting funding for another four stations being Thorpe Bay, Upminster, Westcliff and Rainham.
- These would involve lift access at the bridges at Thorpe Bay, Westcliff and Rainham station and improve step free access without the need to leave the station to move onto the next platform.
- As for Upminster, there currently is no step-free access to platform 6 which goes towards Romford. The scheme would allow c2c to incorporate step-free access for this vital interchange onto London Overground.
- Panel members commented that communication between the c2c team and themselves were lacking and to provide support for the access for all scheme, communication needed to improve.

- Guide dog cards are being distributed by National Rail where passengers can order a card from the National Rail Enquiries website which can be used on the seat next to a passenger, notifying others that the seat has been taken by a service dog.
- 10 new help points have been ordered and are ready to be installed in stations. JAK commented that a help point should be installed at the entrance of stations.
- The panel will be refreshed for the new year, if there are any suggestions then please feedback.
- Panel members commented that incentives would help improve recruitment for the panel as well as bring in local passengers who want the best for their stations.
- CG commented that as ridership has changed then this would need to be taken into account with a social media push as well for recruitment.

Agenda item 2 - Accessibility

- The accessibility strategy is undergoing a number of internal changes to improve processes and how our staff works.
- Whilst we have now received more accessibility complaints than the previous year, we have had a substantial increase in the number of passengers we are seeing month by month.
- We have improved our briefings with stations with a detailed brief as well as improving communication with our passengers during times of disruption as well as at stations.
- Our customer information boards have now been updated with more information about specific locations on the train. The image to the side shows the layout shown to customers at stations with images of where to find the accessible coach as well as as where to put your bikes. We're hoping to expand on this in the future with more symbols for toilets and other features.
- Our service quality team has worked extensively with our asset team to improve our car parks and the number & locations of the help points that can be found at each station.
- The car park works include reaching compliance with the percentage of disabled bays as well as ensuring that there are safe paths and appropriate signage throughout. Out of the 17 car parks, 12 have had bays added or repainted.
- The station brief has now been rolled out and it included language, policies, who to communicate and in the event of disruption or lift failures then it had a step by step guide on how to approach the situation.
- The customer relations team have received extra training in supporting our pre-booked passengers for when something may have gone wrong. Training regarding accessible stations on the route as well as providing alternative solutions to these passengers have been completed.
- The team are already demonstrated this training with a number of lifts becoming unavailable in the last few months and contacting passengers with the information that they need to be able to complete their journey.
- This can range from booking a taxi, ensuring staff will be available or providing an alternative route that can be used for a more difficult to navigate station.
- We are still promoting our pre-booked service during strike action to ensure that all passengers who wish to travel on those dates still can.

- Our customer relations team receive the latest information for staff shortages and work extensively with our control centre and security contractors to ensure that passengers who pre-booked with us are met, regardless of station staffing.
- This approach has been positive as we are able to notify passengers ahead of time with no complaints received about accessibility during strike action.
- Action to look into the history of the Chalkwell works and access for all for changes in timelines.

Agenda item 3 - Smart Ticketing

- DP commented about the recent system outages that have been occurring when purchasing tickets online. c2c confirmed that there has been recent issues such as payments not being completed and smart ticketing not being available but were raised with suppliers to resolve as soon as possible.
- In addition, a query was raised regarding opening hours for customer services when outages may be taking place at late hours. A chatbox project was suggested by the panel for the future.
- Only 5 tickets at a time can be on a smartcard. c2c confirmed that the business has been working with business analysts to improve communication on smartcard limitation on both the app and website.
- An issue was brought up where tickets aren't removed from ticket machines but it will work if a new ticket is purchased.
- An issue was brought up regarding the 14 day collection window for tickets purchased online. An email was received but was too close to collection and a refund was needed. Whilst tickets can be loaded through phones, tickets cannot be held in the ether for an extended period of time.
- Key improvements for smart ticketing include: more intuitive layouts to make it easier to set personalised preferences, Paypal being integrated as a payment method in December, running in-depth analysis to identify issues with payments and fixed messaging for open returns.
- Contactless PAYG is being extended across the entire c2c route with a target launch of Spring/Summer next year. This is in addition to barcode ticketing. Both will be announced to customers in the new year.
- A key challenge will be communications to passengers about the best ticket to purchase with the extensive list of methods that can be used.

Agenda Item 4 - BTP

- The Railway Guardian app has been launched by BTP and pushed to all c2c work phones.
- The number of crime per million journeys has decreased, along with the number of crimes per period and number of calls to service.
- Staff assaults and crimes against a person have stayed steady, however, the number of staff reporting crimes and fare evasion have increased.

- There are a number of things to look forward to such as the safeguarding on rail scheme, samaritans course delivery, funding to enhance BTP and penalty fare legislation.
- In regards to stations that typically see high numbers of incidents, a spotter is in Upminster/Barking to look out for large groups of people and whilst it wasn't perfect, it allowed for extra communication at BTP.
- The department of transport was approached for funding of additional levels of security and there are currently recruitment drives in Essex and Thameside as a lot of staff work in London currently.
- Body worn cameras are essential and have recently been upgraded with a pre-record button to capture information beforehand.
- There was a review of rosters at the start of August and it was discover that we were not using the amount of hours allocated. The extra hours are in bank for when the seasonal amazon workers use the stations along with other times of the year.
- A panel member asked about what can be done at Chalkwell station for crowds. BTP confirmed that crowd control can be done, however, unless there is a special order for searches, BTP require reasonable cause before searching passengers at stations.

Agenda Item 5 - Roundtable

- BO asked about what can be done about the smokers at Basildon station as they make the area unsightly. BTP confirmed that they aren't able to remove passengers outside the station and that they'll need to be in station property.
- DP asked about an issue with the tracks between West Horndon and Upminster. c2c confirmed that this issue has been under investigation as of late with Network Rail involved in track checkings and maintenance.
- A panel member also asked about train diagrams and how they operate during disruption as their train did not stop at the station.
- CG asked if there was any new train news, however, c2c confirmed that there is no news.

Next meeting date: