

# Minute Item 6.(ii)



## Executive Office

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Your Ref: DE  
Our Ref: PHO-0202747118

Mr Damian Eaton  
CSS Manager (Legal & Democratic Services)  
Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council  
Town Hall  
Stockport  
SK1 3XE

8 August 2018

Dear Mr Eaton

Thank you for your letter of 25 July 2018, addressed to our CEO, Ross McEwan. Ross has asked that I respond to your complaint on his behalf as a case manager within his Executive Office.

I do understand Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council's disappointment with our decision to close our Royal Bank of Scotland branches in Cheadle Hulme, Bramhall, Cheadle, Heaton Chapel and Stockport. It is always very difficult to make a decision to close a branch, and we have considered this very carefully. Whilst we won't be revisiting the decision, I hope to explain in more detail how we arrived at our decision and the range of alternatives available to our customers.

We provide our customers with more ways to bank than ever before, and the way people bank with us has changed radically over the last few years. As we are no longer divesting the Royal Bank of Scotland in England and Wales we have reviewed our overall branch network, taking into consideration changes in customer behaviour, how customers are choosing to bank with us, and the range of alternative ways to bank in each local area.

In England and Wales, where we often have a NatWest and Royal Bank of Scotland branch in close proximity to each other, we've made the difficult decision to close a number of Royal Bank of Scotland branches. Our nearest NatWest branches are located around two miles from our Cheadle Hulme branch, around 100 yards from our Bramhall branch, around 100 yards from our Cheadle branch, less than half a mile from our Heaton Chapel branch and around 50 yards from our Stockport branch.

Customers of Royal Bank of Scotland are now able to use NatWest branches for their everyday banking needs, in addition to any Royal Bank of Scotland branch. They will also continue to have access to the same products and services as the rest of our customers across the UK. To support our Royal Bank of Scotland customers with these services and their banking needs, we will dedicate members of staff in our nearest NatWest branches to offer assistance.



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Our telephone banking service provides another alternative to branch banking, and is available, 365 days a year. Customers can carry out the vast majority of transactions available at a branch and our telephony staff can also discuss our product range and arrange for a financial review over the phone. Most of our accounts can be applied for and opened in this way, meaning that a trip to the branch is not always necessary.

We have also invested in our contract with the Post Office and 99.7% of all of our customers will live within 15 minutes of a branch, a mobile branch or a Post Office location. The Post Office has 11,600 branches across the UK and our customers benefit from longer opening hours with many branches open on Sundays. Customers can check their balance, deposit cash and cheques, withdraw cash and business customers can obtain coinage.

The Post Office in Cheadle Hulme is around 350 yards from our Cheadle Hulme branch and is open Monday to Friday 8:45am to 5:30pm and Saturday 8:45am to 1pm. The Post Office in Bramhall is around 350 yards from our Bramhall branch, and is open Monday to Friday 9am to 5:30pm and 9am to 4pm on Saturday. The Post Office in Cheadle is around 500 yards from our Cheadle branch, and is open Monday to Saturday 7am to 5:30pm. The Post Office in Heaton Chapel is around 500 yards from our Heaton Chapel branch and is open Monday 8:30am to 5:30pm, Tuesday to Friday 9am to 5:30pm and Saturday 9am to 2pm, and the Post Office in Stockport is around 50 yards from our Stockport branch and is open Monday to Friday 9am to 5:30pm (with the exception of Tuesday when it opens at 9:30am), and Saturday 9am to 12:30pm.

We know that not all of our customers are comfortable or familiar with using online or mobile banking, so we have created a new specialist taskforce of Royal Bank of Scotland TechXperts who will be dedicated to providing our customers with training and support with digital skills until the branches close. Our TechXperts will run specific events for customers on ways to bank, as well as arranging one-to-one conversations individually.

Our Area Director for Cheadle Hulme and Bramhall, Aouse Fattah and our Area Director for Cheadle, Heaton Chapel and Stockport, Tracy Wright, would be very happy to answer any questions you or local residents may have relating to banking in the local area. If you wish to arrange a meeting with our Area Directors to discuss your concerns in more detail, Aouse can be contacted by telephone on 07909 957 687 or email at [aouse.fattah@rbs.co.uk](mailto:aouse.fattah@rbs.co.uk) and Tracy can be contacted by telephone on 07771 815 786 or email at [tracy.wright@rbs.co.uk](mailto:tracy.wright@rbs.co.uk).

I do appreciate that the community will be disappointed by our decision. However, I hope I have made clear our commitment to supporting our customers with alternative ways to bank.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact us.

Yours sincerely



Mike Purves  
Chief Executive Office



Department  
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Our Ref: 234176

7<sup>th</sup> August 2018

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Dear Mr Eaton

Thank you for your email of 25 July 2018 to the Rt. Hon Chris Grayling MP, Secretary of State for Transport, received 27 July 2018, about the timetable change within Northern rail. Your email has been forwarded on to the Passenger Services team for reply.

Firstly, we fully understand the inconvenience that you and other passengers are experiencing on the Northern routes and the impact this is having on work and social life.

Restoring services to what they should be is one of the Department's biggest priorities. Since the introduction of the May timetable, the Department and the industry have been working round the clock to restore the reliability of the service across the network. Hour by hour, Department officials are in contact with Northern and Network Rail to work to improve the service for passengers.

Please be assured that passengers on the lines that have been severely affected by these issues will receive additional compensation. Eligibility criteria will be developed with Transport for the North and announced in due course, with passengers able to make compensation claims from early July.

We are also looking at options to further support the northern economy, and we expect Northern to fund a marketing campaign encouraging travel to affected areas by train when it resumes full operations, particularly on the Lakes line. This is the most significant timetable recast in a generation - designing a robust, well-integrated timetable that works for the majority of passengers is highly complex and timetabling practitioners have worked hard for more than a year on the challenges involved. We were aware that there might be some disruption in the early days of any new timetable change of this size, but the scale of the problem had outstripped any expectation.

Network Rail's System Operator division is responsible for taking all planned timetables and making sure that the plans for the whole network are workable and do not create conflicts between different types of service.

The industry collectively has failed the passengers it serves. A combination of delayed Network Rail infrastructure works and reduced planning time meant that the new timetable was finalised much too late to permit adequate logistical planning for the timetable changes. Network Rail's failure to deliver the electrification to Bolton and Preston in time for the new timetable had already caused severe operational planning issues as the introduction of new electric trains has had to wait. This has meant that there is a shortage of trains to cover the increased number of services originally planned for the timetable change. The reduced time to plan a modified timetable has made this situation much worse and a significant number of Northern's services have had to be changed at very short notice leaving no time to resolve the train scheduling issues which have arisen.

The Secretary of State has made it clear to the rail industry that it must urgently improve its operational response including, if necessary, by changing top management, as has now happening at GTR. We also have new leadership at Network Rail, Andrew Haines, its new Chief Executive. Andrew will be personally responsible for ensuring that any timetable change is deliverable and the Secretary of State has also commissioned an independent inquiry<sup>1</sup> by Stephen Glaister of the Office of Rail and Road, the independent regulator, to examine why we are in this situation and to reduce the chances of it ever happening again. An interim report is expected to be published in September ahead of a final report by the end of the year.

We are pleased to say that Northern's implementation of an interim timetable has helped to bring some stability, giving passengers the ability to better plan ahead - for example, on the first day of Northern's new timetable 73% of trains ran on time, whereas within 4 weeks 87% of trains were running on time. However, we know that many passengers remain – understandably – frustrated with the continuing disruption on some parts of the network and that there is still a long way to go until performance is good enough.

Northern has had several resourcing issues that have impacted on service delivery and, whilst this has been for a number of different reasons, it is something that Northern will continue to work hard to address. As a result of the delay to electrification schemes in the North West and major infrastructure works at Liverpool Lime Street Station, Northern is currently undertaking a significant training plan, especially of drivers. This training is planned to continue until the end of July.

Once we are through this difficult and challenging period, the Department is confident that we will have a better railway, fit for the future – particularly once all the new trains start to arrive later this year.

Thank you again for your email and for raising your concerns with us and we hope this reply is helpful.

Yours sincerely

**Correspondence Team, Passenger Services, Rail Group**

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<sup>1</sup> <http://orr.gov.uk/news-and-media/press-releases/2018/orr-launches-independent-inquiry-into-may-timetable-disruption>

## Damian Eaton

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**From:** Lucja Majewski <Lucja.Majewski@FirstGroup.com>  
**Sent:** 01 August 2018 17:39  
**To:** Damian Eaton  
**Cc:** Graham Meiklejohn; Sue Kelly  
**Subject:** Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council – Northern Rail Services Across Stockport

Dear Damian,

Thank you for your letter of 25 July 2018 regarding the recent timetable change in May 2018 and the associated points raised.

I feel it is important to restate the objectives from the timetable change for TransPennine Express. The May 2018 timetable represented one of biggest changes to rail services in the north for many years and delivered more services, earlier/later services during the week and more services at the weekend including:

- six TransPennine Express trains every hour between Leeds and Manchester
- two trains per hour between Newcastle and Manchester
- improved evening services on routes to Middlesbrough, Scarborough and Hull delivering weekday service levels seven days a week
- reduced journey times across much of the network including between Liverpool and Manchester
- new connections to our network in Merseyside, Greater Manchester and West Yorkshire, bringing high quality services to these communities

Since the introduction of the new timetable on our North TransPennine route between Liverpool – Manchester – Leeds and Hull, York, Scarborough, Middlesbrough and Newcastle, customers have faced disruption and delay, from a range of external factors, most notably the performance of other operators.

There has also been a number of failures of the infrastructure and severe congestion at key stations such as Manchester Victoria, Manchester Oxford Road and Leeds, where platforms have at times been unavailable for our services. In addition to this large Network Rail incidents have had a severe impact on performance, notably several instances of trespass.

Performance of services on our South TransPennine route, Manchester Airport – Manchester – Stockport – Sheffield – Doncaster – Cleethorpes, has remained high since the new timetable was introduced, regularly achieving service delivery of 100%. The exception to this has been significant external issues such as the suicidal person on Stockport viaduct.

I hope that this reply has been of assistance.

Kind regards

Lucja

**Lucja Majewski**  
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Damian Eaton  
CSS Manager  
Democratic and Legal Services  
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Stockport SK1 3XE

31 July 2018

Dear Mr Eaton

## **Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council Motion – Taxi Licensing**

Thank you for your letter dated 25th July highlighting the Council's concern around existing taxi licensing legislation and its inability to deal with the issue of taxi and private hire vehicles (PHV) and drivers which routinely operate within one local authority area but are licenced elsewhere. As you note, where drivers are not licensed by the authority where they are operating, there is little that the authority can do to ensure the standards they expect from their own drivers are met, which undermines public safety.

As the council's motion notes, this is an issue that affects and concerns councils all over the country and the LGA strongly supports the need for urgent changes to legislation to ensure consistently high standards in taxi licensing across the country. We have consistently called for Government to introduce a new Taxi and PHV Licensing Reform Bill which as a minimum would include; national minimum standards - set at an appropriately high level but allowing local flexibility; stronger enforcement powers, so that authorities can enforce against any driver operating in their area, and a mechanism to ensure that drivers are working predominantly in the area where they are licensed.

Since September last year, the LGA has been participating in a working group set up by former taxis Minister John Hayes MP in order to make recommendations about changes to taxi and PHV legislation. The working group heard from a range of stakeholders including licensing authorities, the trade and passenger interest groups. A final report has been submitted to Government, and we have received a commitment that the report will be published in September. Concern about routine out of area working was a consistent theme in the working group's discussions, and we hope that the report will help prompt the government to bring forward new legislation.

As you are already aware, there are certain things that are within our power to do as a sector to raise standards and I am encouraged to hear about the work you are involved in regionally through the Greater Manchester Combined Authority to harmonise policies and standards.

I know that it is deeply frustrating to councils as well as to the LGA that progress on achieving much needed changes to our taxi and PHV licensing legislation is slow, but please accept my



assurances that we are working hard on behalf of our members to try to address this issue and ensure we have a legal framework that is fit for the future.

Should you wish to discuss any of this in further detail, please contact Rebecca Johnson (Adviser – Regulation, 0207 664 3227 / [rebecca.johnson@local.gov.uk](mailto:rebecca.johnson@local.gov.uk)) who will be happy to assist you.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Porter of Spalding". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Lord Porter of Spalding CBE  
Chairman