

HEIDI ALLEN MP  
SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Jo Johnson, MP  
Minister of State for Transport, Minister of State for London

3<sup>rd</sup> August 2018

Dear Jo,

I am writing to give you an update on the situation on the ground for my GTR passengers on the London to Cambridge and London to Peterborough routes (incorporating all stations that my constituents use which include Royston, Letchworth, Ashwell and Morden, Meldreth, Shepreth and Foxton on the Cambridge line and St Neots and Biggleswade on the Peterborough line).

The 15<sup>th</sup> July timetable has brought some stabilisation to the routes however, reliable provision remains patchy. I have been alerted to continuing issues of reliability with the weekday and weekend timetables with Monday morning services being particularly bad (commuters have concluded, rightly or wrongly that staffing and operational issues are the root cause of these problems).

Yesterday, I wrote to the ORR (copy attached) to highlight some concerns raised by commuters with regard to overcrowding, temperature control within carriages and speed adherence. It is worth mentioning that these problems are almost always exacerbated by a delay or cancellation. This concern is more pertinent during these extreme hot weather conditions and I therefore urge the Department to ensure that GTR are adhering to industry guidelines with regard to passenger safety.

In spite of the compensation offer and the introduction of the new interim timetable commuters remain concerned that services are unreliable with carriage conditions sometimes unbearable. They feel that this situation does not justify the price of a season ticket. The continuing cost of the ongoing disruption to the South Cambridgeshire economy remains a serious concern.

The timetable change has highlighted systemic issues on the London to Cambridgeshire routes relating to staffing, infrastructure investment and rolling stock. These routes badly need investment in all three areas to ensure that they are robust enough to cope with the increasing demands of our growing economy. I would welcome

- a) an update from you about what steps are being taken to provide immediate resilience for these routes
- b) a summary of the findings of the specialist DfT team who have been installed in GTR with a view to examining whether franchise commitments have been met.

My commuters have been extremely tolerant over the past two months however, despite constant assurances, service provision remains inconsistent. To reassure my commuters that we have not abandoned them through summer recess, I would be grateful if you could give this your urgent attention and provide a response within the next week.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Heidi Allen'.

Heidi Allen  
MP for South Cambridgeshire