

Stephanie Tobyn
Director of Strategy, Policy and Reform



Sarah Copley
Executive Director, Commercial
Avanti West Coast
[by email only]

10 February 2023

Dear Sarah,

Enabling passengers to plan their journeys – improved recovery plan

Thank you for the submission of your improved recovery plan for timetable production on 2 February 2023, together with the confirmation that you have agreed this plan with Network Rail. We will now hold you to account for delivery of the improved plan and will be monitoring its effectiveness closely.

I welcome your careful consideration of the reasons why your initial recovery was not sustained, what you could have done differently and how that learning has been applied. I note the actions that you have taken, and plan to take, to create a more resilient plan, and that it is improved ways of working with Network Rail and resourcing improvements at AWC that are expected to make the most impact.

You highlight the risks to your plan and illustrate how your planned actions aim to provide mitigations. These risks include the impact of industrial action, rephased engineering works, the timing of decisions around the May 2023 timetable, and resourcing, retention and recruitment of staff with timetable planning skills. It is notable that, for many of the risks, you assess your mitigations as having quite limited impact in reducing the risk. As part of holding you to account for delivery of your improved plan, we will press you to identify opportunities to strengthen your risk mitigations further where possible.

I note that you have made some early improvements to passenger information, and particularly welcome the publication on your website this week of the dates that you expect to release tickets to your passengers. You commit to further improvements, and I note that implementing your plans for communications relating to the Carstairs engineering work will be particularly important for passengers.



You have set out a plan showing a pathway to full and sustained recovery to timetable production in line with current industry norms by mid-May. I recognise that the significant engineering work at the Carstairs junction during March and April adds complexity to your plan, and the impact that has on your recovery timescales.

We will hold you to account against the plan you have submitted, will expect to see evidence that you are actively managing the risks to your plan, and that you are implementing continuous improvements to your passenger information. We have already agreed a pattern of weekly reporting. I have asked Jacqui Russell, the head of our consumer team, to convene a tripartite meeting with Avanti and Network Rail to provide additional assurance.

I am copying this letter to Chris Rowley (Capacity Planning Director) at Network Rail.

Yours sincerely

Stephanie Tobyn