

Dear Friend

I hope you are still staying safe.

I invite you to our meeting on **Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> January 2025 at 19:30 on Zoom**; I am targeting a finish by 20:45; definitely by 21:00.

As regards our subsequent three meetings, they will be:

- **Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> March at 11:00 in Person** at GTR's Offices at Kings Cross – and followed by lunch at 13:00 (but see below on in person or Zoom).
- **Wednesday 9th April at 19:30 on Zoom.**
- **Saturday 17th May 11:00 in Person** at St Paul's Church in St Albans – and followed by lunch at 13:00.

Tentatively, we will then be meeting mid-week on Zoom in June and July and August will be a “social” outing on a Saturday.

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88450315544?pwd=d3krdCtiUHlrMEsQcGtMWm1zVU9Qdz09>; alternatively join manually via <https://zoom.us/join>, then Meeting ID: 884 5031 5544 & Passcode: 910342.

*If your PC doesn't have a microphone, then use the link above to open (and download, if needed) the software and, once connected, click the up arrow next to the microphone or join audio icon (bottom left) and follow the “switch to phone audio link” If you don't have a PC, tablet or Smartphone available, call one of the 3 numbers below, enter the Meeting ID [then '#'] at the first prompt; at the second prompt just press '#' and at the third prompt, enter the password [then '#']. Phone numbers to dial: 0131 460 1196 | 020 3481 5237 | 020 3481 5240.*

## Topics for meeting

1. Welcome
2. East West Rail (more below)
3. Fares, including Contactless extension
4. ORR and Transport on Penalty Fares (more below)
5. Performance (more below)
6. National developments (more below)
7. March meeting venue (more below)
8. Just in case
  - ECML December 2025 Timetable
  - Fares (generally)
  - Hadley Wood Toilet
  - Long Blockades
  - Written updates
9. Round table

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There are various links to our documents below; you may instead prefer to browse the directory; this can be found here: <https://bit.ly/RfHBfiles>.

## East West Rail consultation

The East West Rail non-statutory consultation is now well underway. That can be found [here](#); if you are a member you should have received a second email from the East Anglia Branch around the 14<sup>th</sup> of January (if you did not, do let me know, I will investigate). That email has been uploaded to our [Consultation page](#); it included a draft of the Railfuture response which can be read directly here – [In your browser](#) | [Download](#).

The email observes:

You can respond to the consultation in four ways (you can be as detailed as you wish, but please don't mention Railfuture as it is your personal response):

- Completing the consultation feedback form online
- Emailing a copy of the feedback form to [consultation@eastwestrail.co.uk](mailto:consultation@eastwestrail.co.uk)
- Posting a copy of the feedback form to: Freepost EAST WEST RAIL
- Handing in a copy of the feedback form at a consultation event

Using the <https://eastwestrail.co.uk/feedback-form> is best. However, if this is too time-consuming for you, then please send a simple email saying something like "I support East West Rail. Please get on and build it" to [consultation@eastwestrail.co.uk](mailto:consultation@eastwestrail.co.uk) including your name and address and briefly why the scheme is important to you.

The closing date is Friday 24 January.

## Project Oval and fares

I have at last produced the materials needed for a campaign. This consists of:

1. A Press Release or letter to be sent to those who we want to engage. Said document will require light editing for the planned recipient -eg for an MP, drop the list at the beginning and mentioned only stations either in their constituency or others nearby likely to be used by their constituents.
2. A briefing on the contactless roll out.

I intend to start distributing these after our meeting on Tuesday, so would welcome any last minute feedback. Pending a final post meeting edit they can be found here: Press Release / letter (in [browser](#) | [download](#)) | Briefing (in [browser](#) | [download](#)).

A challenge is that we are responding to a "threat" that is vague; we don't know:

- When the remaining 47 stations in the current roll out such as those on the West Coast Mainline will actually receive contactless
- Whether anything at all will happen regarding the next 45 stations before the rollout above completes.

Nevertheless I think it worthwhile proceeding, with a real focus of getting the attention of relevant MPs.

Suggestions as to priorities appreciated.

I must admit to having failed miserably at progressing this. But after this newsletter I will be turning my attention to the issue.

### ORR and Transport Focus on Penalty fares

Transport Focus have just published “Revenue protection priorities to improve passenger experience” – see their [website](#).

To me, I easily support what they are suggesting. Personally, I would rebrand “Penalty Fares” as “Late payment fares”. I also think when summed up

<i>Issue</i>	<i>Start point</i>
The passenger has the wrong ticket	It was a mistake
The passenger doesn't have their Railcard	Check on a database (as suggested by TF)
The passenger doesn't have any ticket	They couldn't reasonably have bought one.

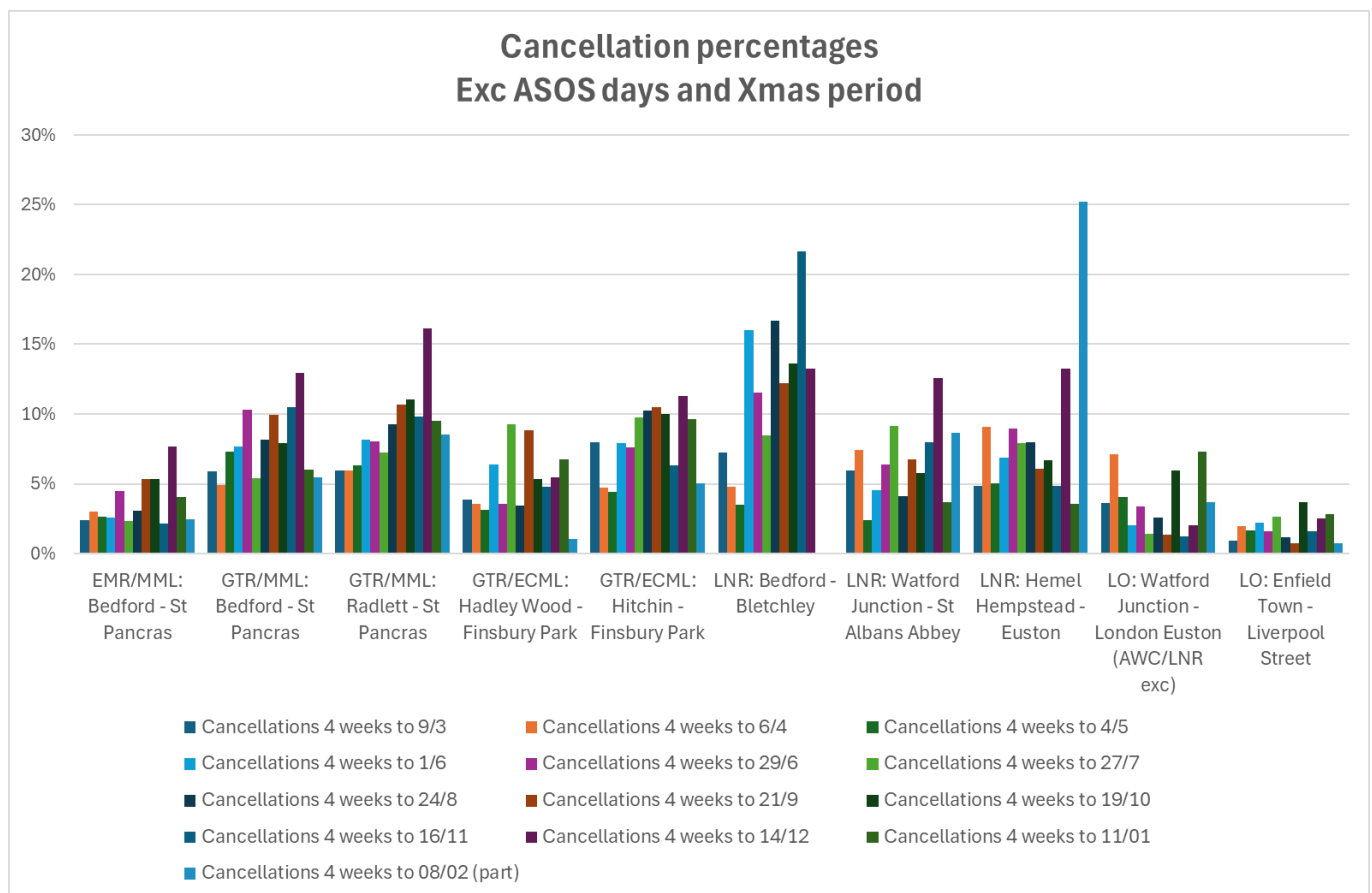
In all these cases, a Late payment fare or prosecution can be an outcome, but the start point is very much a mistake / reasonable behaviour.

Linked to this, the ORR is currently undertaking a survey of specific experiences, for which they have just extended the end date to 31 January. Please do complete it if relevant – and also encourage friends and family to complete. More on their [website](#).

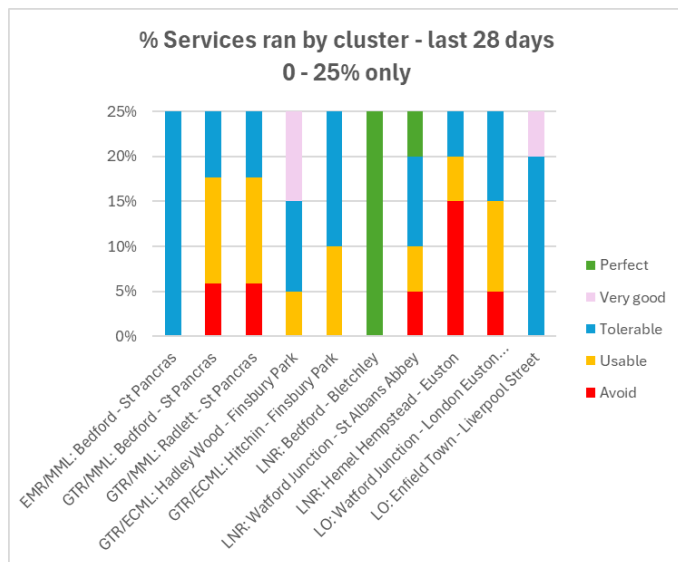
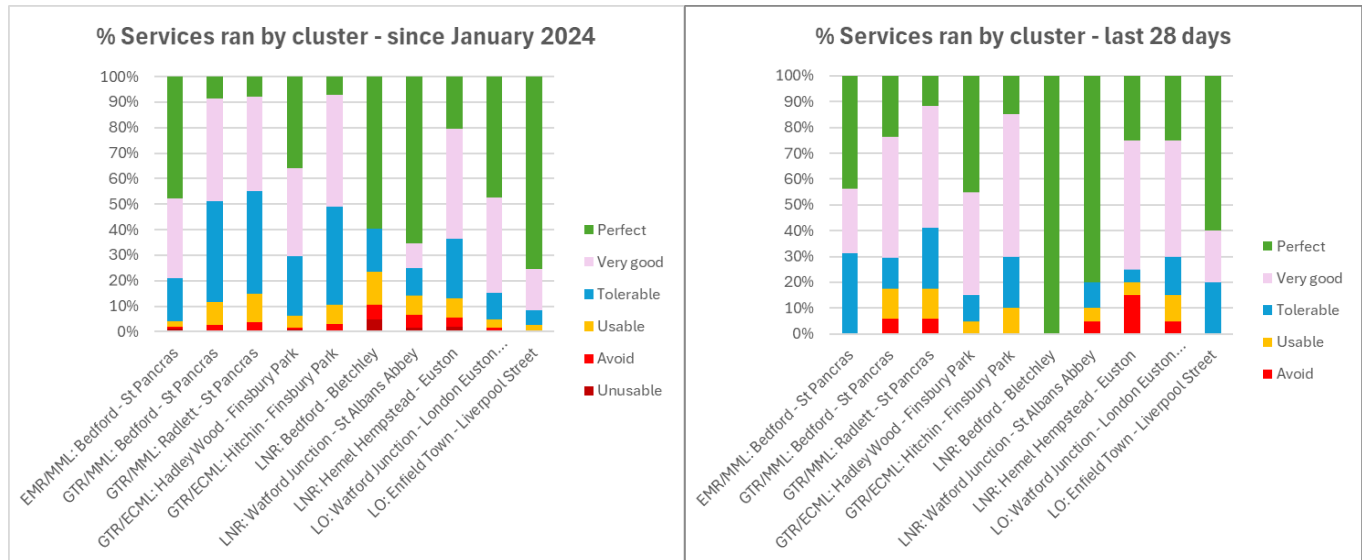
### Performance

I have continued to collect the performance data for our main services via Recent Train Times.

#### Cancellations over time



In these next graphs, I explore the spread of cancellations (excluding the Christmas period):



**Definitions**

- 38% Unusable
- 50% Avoid
- 70% Usable
- 85% Tolerable
- 95% Very good
- 100% Perfect

For 'all of 2024' Action Short of a Strike days have been excluded.

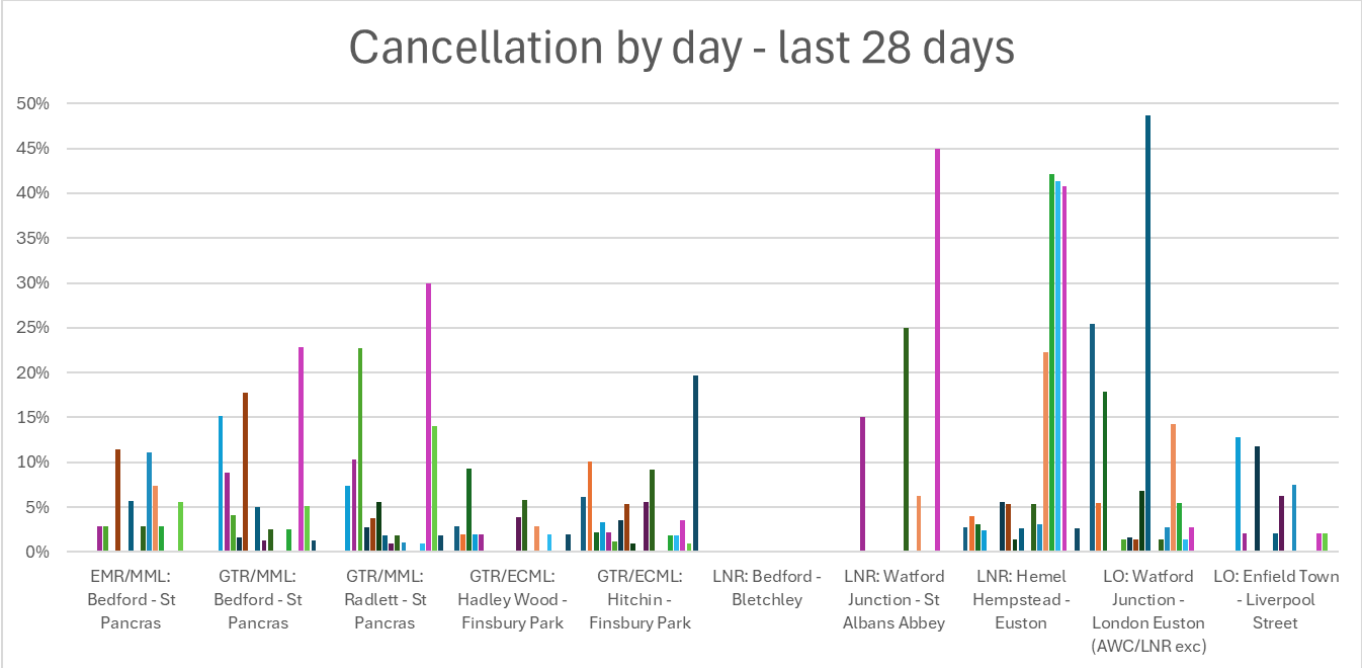
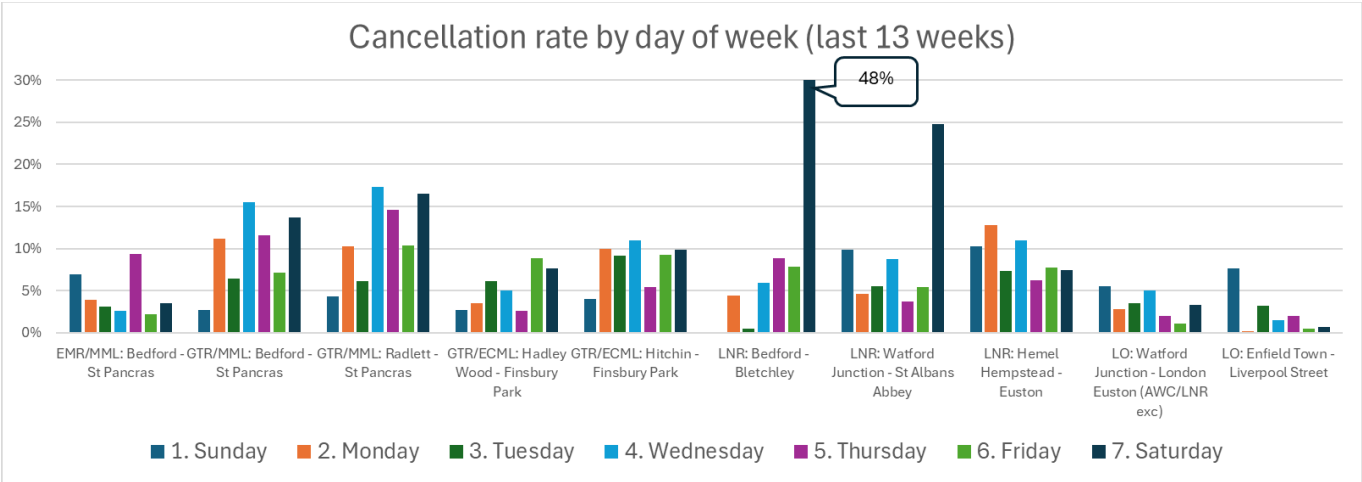
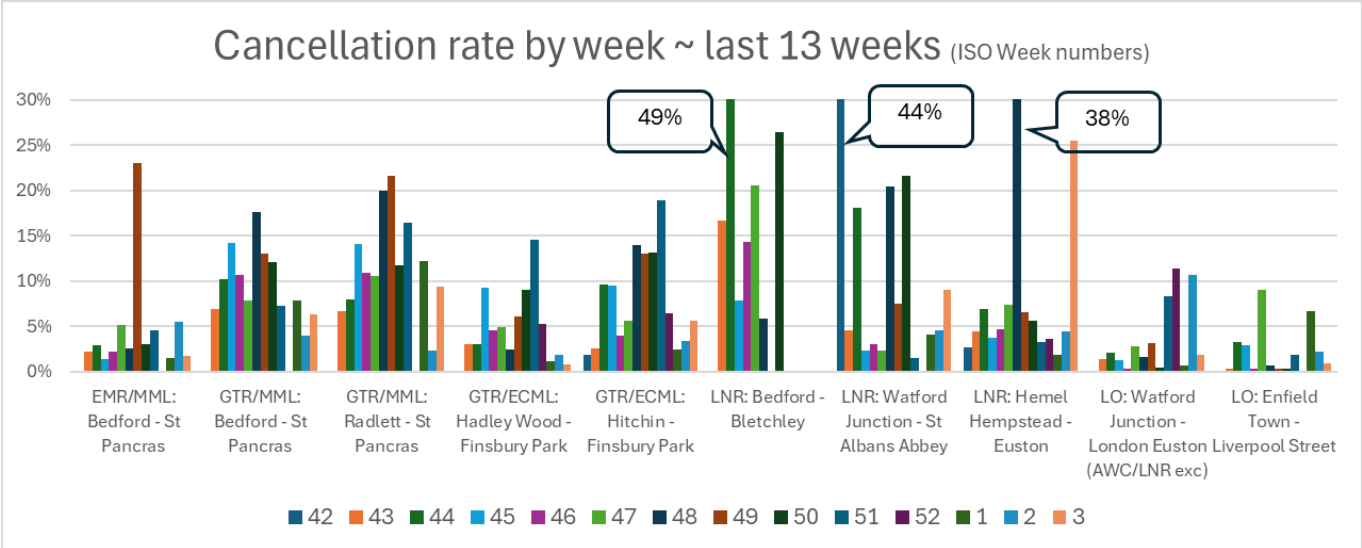
Because I am measuring this statistic across at the “whole of day” level, I do not detect long gaps within the day.

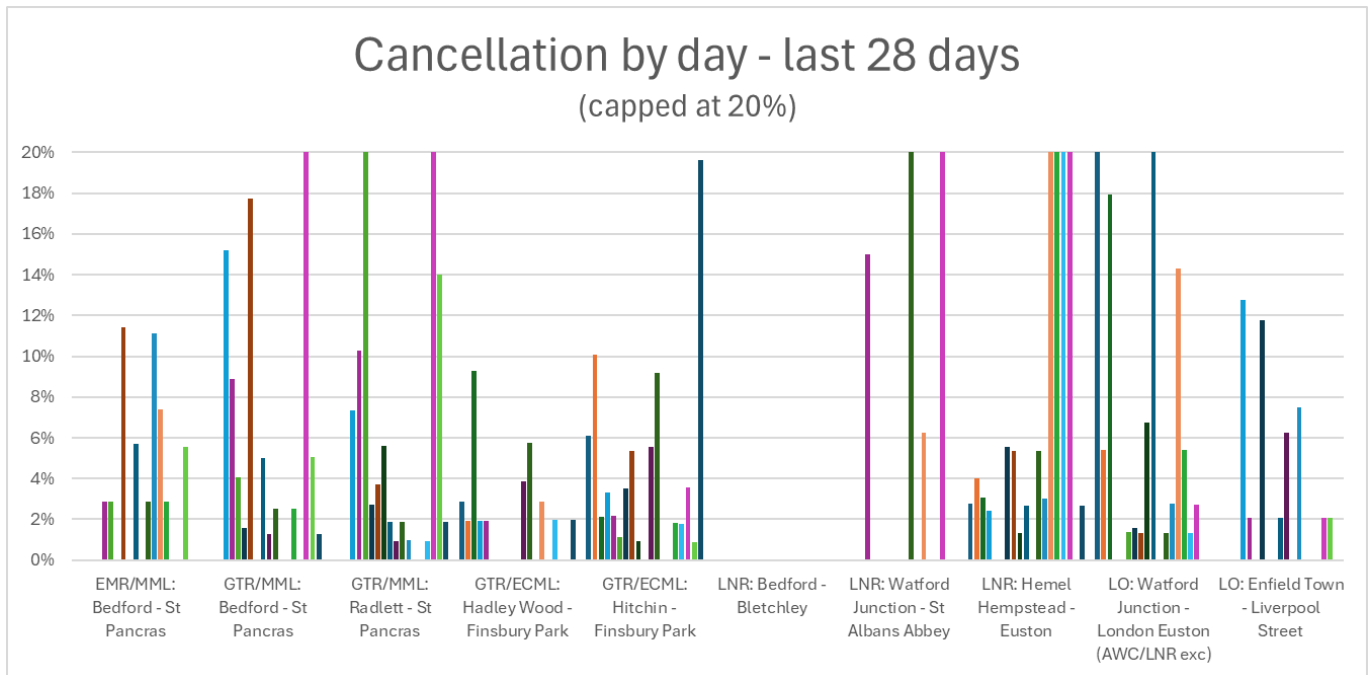
**Cancellations by week / day of the week**

In these graphs, I am trying to see if we can increase our understanding of the volatility of cancellations. Both graphs are quite granular, and the objective is much less to look at week X and understand the rate there and much more to understand does it change a lot. The first graph looks at cancellations by week over thirteen weeks, the second at cancellation by day of the week over the last thirteen weeks and the third cancellations by day over the last 28 days. This last graph is particularly prone to “dodgy data” at the level of granularity in place.

*Continued overleaf*

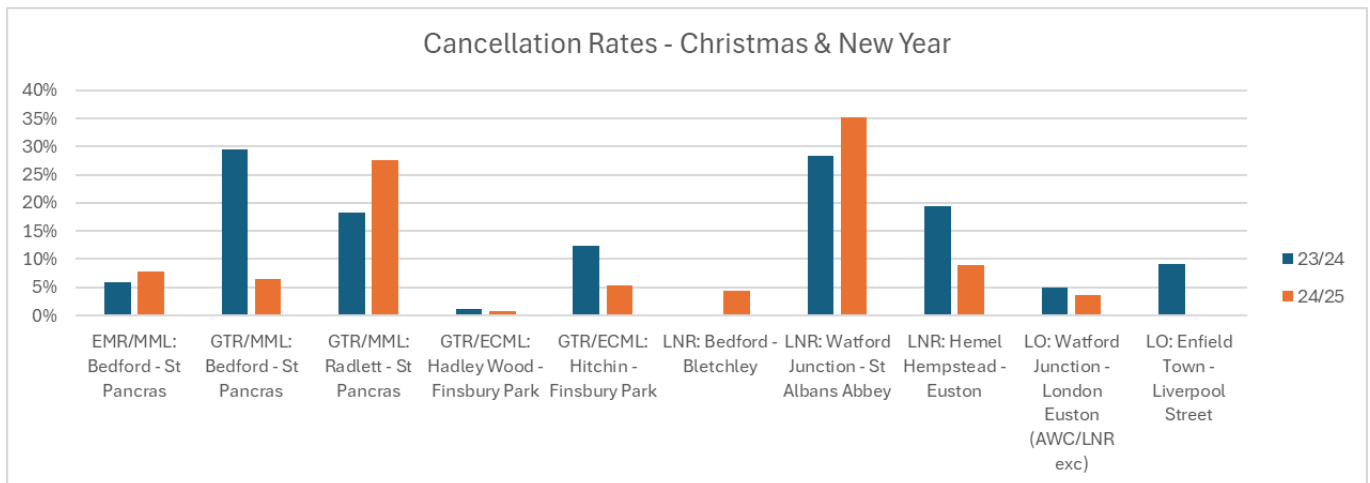
For this month, the Christmas period has been excluded





### Christmas

I have a 'special' graph this month, looking at performance this Christmas vs last (23/24).



There are so many other factors in play (eg Midland Mainline blockade) that deducing a reliable comparison of performance alone is difficult to impossible.

Note: my definition of Christmas is 25 December to 1 January inclusive. I started collecting data on 28 December 2023.

### Commentary

#### GTR's brands and service changes – disruption and planned engineering work

Nothing to report on this, but a topic I will return to.

### National developments

In case you missed them, these are of note:

- As mentioned at the last meeting; the Government's Devolution white paper has been [published](#). From what I read and hear:
  - Councils in Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire are 'on manoeuvres' as to who they will align with, how they will split up etc. Bedfordshire authorities seem to wanting to align themselves with Milton Keynes.

- It seems to me that the best structure Council for rail will often be different to the best structure for many other purposes – rail geography is not in line with other sensible structures.

## March meeting

There are engineering works on the Midland Mainline on Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> March. There are services on the East Coast and West Coast Mainlines. My intention is to proceed as is (but subject to confirming that GTR can still host – Andrew comes in from Bedford). In good part that is because I have to be in Central London later for a Board Meeting.

This is an opportunity for the view of the meeting to be a switch to Zoom.

## Written updates / Topics 'on hold'

- **inter-railse** [archive](#) (the branch's two page e-newsletter). We recently added many more members to the list of recipients; if you are not already receiving it in your inbox, [email Roger Blake](#). Give your choice from receiving a web link or as a PDF attachment.

## Engineering blockade publicity

The next step is to “convert” the Railwatch article into a position paper. In the article I majored on multi day impacts on commuters, but a common theme of conversations has been that sometimes we organise our lives a lot longer ahead than the railway's typical 12 week timeframe – and sometimes have choices of dates (will I go to the Panto on the 7<sup>th</sup> or the 14<sup>th</sup>?) and this should be bought into play as a key factor.

## Ticket Office closures consultation

No news to report.

## For the record: Performance measures

See Appendix A.

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Stay Safe.

*Neil*

## Neil Middleton

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**Appendix A / Performance measures**

1. Lack of notice (when a likely shortage of resources in the near future is reasonably predictable in advance). Two 'test' points:
  - a. Shortly before going to the station / in time to get the previous train (our definition: 1 hour before)
  - b. In time to rearrange journeys, appointments etc (our definition: early evening the day before)
2. Loss of first or last train of the day (with the loss of the last train being worse than the first)
3. Gaps of more than 1 hour or cancellation of 2 consecutive services
4. inequity in allocation of lost services – ie better some impact on most service clusters than some service clusters taking most of the impact.
5. Cancellation via skip stopping of the first train post disruption and gaps as per #2 above.