



Matt Ablett

Current Position | Partner
Profession | Rail Consultant
Years of Rail Experience | 25



Professional Background

Matt Ablett is an experienced rail consultant who joined Winder Phillips Associates in 2008. With a background in Operational Research, Matt is an expert analyst who has vast experience of using rail industry data to provide advice and insight to Operators, Transport Authorities and regulatory bodies. His areas of expertise lie in operational performance analysis and forecasting, and analysis of passenger demand and revenue trends.

Matt is an expert in the train performance regimes in place in the UK and has worked on over 20 franchise and concession bids for heavy rail, metro and light rail operations over the last 15 years, in both the UK and overseas. Recent projects have included developing bid performance plans, producing performance forecast models, and quantifying the financial risk associated with contractual performance regimes. In Technical Advisor roles, he has supported both DfT and Transport Scotland, focusing on specifying contractual performance regimes, developing comparator forecasts and undertaking evaluation of bidder responses.

Matt has recently undertaken the evaluation of TOC operational performance delivery under the EMA agreements on behalf of DfT and Transport Scotland, and has strong experience of auditing performance data, systems and processes, having been part of the ORR and NR Independent Reporter team since 2009.

Key Skills

- Strong analytical skills
- Vast experience of working with rail industry performance datasets and developing performance forecasting models
- Solid understanding of rail industry performance regimes (Schedule 8 of Track Access Agreement and Schedule 7 of Franchise Agreements)
- Expert user in all Microsoft products
- Practical experience of utilising data from the UK rail ticket revenue system (Lennon) to provide revenue and journey trend analysis and forecasts
- Expert user in MOIRA
- Sound knowledge of the principles behind farebox revenue allocation in the UK rail industry.

Projects

Network Rail Independent Reporter, ORR (2009 – ongoing): WPA has supported Arup in its Independent Reporter role working with the ORR and Network Rail (NR) to review NR's delivery of their plans since the start of CP4. As part of this, Matt has provided analytical review into the quality, accuracy and reliability of NR's data that is used to report performance to ORR, DfT and the wider industry in each year. Ahead of CP6, Matt reviewed NR's performance forecasts as presented in its Strategic Business Plan, and the calculations behind the new regulatory passenger performance metric (CRM-P). He has recently audited the reporting of both this new metric and the regional freight performance metric (Freight Delivery Metric – Region; FDM-R) and is currently reviewing NR's performance forecasts for CP7.

Industry Revenue Recovery Reporting, GBRTT (2021 - ongoing): Matt is currently leading the reporting workstream within GBRTT's Passenger Revenue team. The team are responsible for producing daily, weekly and periodic reports to the industry summarising latest trends in recovery of passenger revenue following the COVID-19 pandemic, and underlying drivers of change.

EMA Evaluation, DfT (2021 - 2022): Matt was the Lead Evaluator for the team evaluating the operational performance delivery of two TOCs against the contractual requirements their Emergency Measures Agreements.



Technical Advisor, Transport Scotland (2021): As part of the Technical Advisor team for Transport Scotland, Matt undertook the evaluation of operational performance of both ScotRail and Caledonian Sleeper against the contractual requirements of each Operator's first two Emergency Measures Agreements.

Advice to a TOC in a Sustained Poor Performance Claim (2020 - 2023): Matt provided expert performance advice as part of a TOC's Sustained Poor Performance claim against Network Rail. In his role, Matt provided expert opinion on the extent of poor performance during the claim period and how it was experienced by passengers.

HS2 Operational Review, West Coast Partnership Development (2020): Matt supported West Coast Partnership Development, in its role as shadow operator, in an Operational Review of HS2 Ltd's work on matters related to the planned operation of train services. Matt's role was technical author for the final draft report, focusing on performance and Automatic Train Operation.

Performance Risk Modelling for Nice-Azur Lines, Confidential Bidder (2020 – 2021): Working for a bidder for the contract to operate trains on the Nice-Azur line, Matt developed a forecast of operational performance KPIs to evaluate the potential financial risk related to these regimes. This required analysis of historical data to understand recent trends and evaluate the impact of proposed initiatives and known risks.

Performance Risk Modelling for Dubai Metro and Tram, RATP-Dev / Alstom (2019 – 2020): Matt's core role was to forecast the financial contingency risk values related to contractual performance KPIs to include within the bid price. This involved analysing historical data related to each KPI and developing a statistical model to simulate the potential future financial risk and support each workflow leader in developing their plans to deliver the contractual targets.

Expert Review of Schedule 8 Costs related to an Insurance Claim (2019): Matt provided expert advice to an insurance company related to a claim from NR for financial losses under Schedule 8 of the Track Access Agreement. This included an evaluation of the value of the Schedule 8 claim and of the management of the incident by Network Rail.

Technical Advisor - West Coast Partnership, DfT (2015 – 2019): A member of the Atkins Technical Advisor team to DfT for the West Coast Partnership franchise, Matt led the performance workstream. As part of this role, he developed a performance model (and comparator forecast) as part of the comparator modelling suite, provided advice on the operational performance metrics against which to monitor the franchisee and calculated the performance benchmarks and payment rates for these metrics.

South Western and Transpennine Franchise Bids, First Group (2015 - 2016): Matt was the lead author for the Performance Delivery Plan for the successful South Western bid. As part of the bid strategy development, he reviewed the current Operator's approach to managing disruption and the impact on performance, both in terms of major events and regular perturbation. Matt also led the Performance workstream for the successful Transpennine Express bid. He was responsible for developing the Performance Delivery Plan strategy, including the business continuity and contingency planning strategy, and writing the Plan.

Technical Advisor, Transport Scotland (2012 – 2015): Part of the Atkins Technical Advisor team to Transport Scotland for the letting of the Sleeper and ScotRail franchises in 2015, Matt provided advice and analytical support on operational areas such as train performance and journey times, developed the Performance Comparator Model and evaluated Delivery Plans and operational models. Supported TS during the mobilisation phase of both franchises.

Previous Positions Held

- Principal Consultant; DeltaRail, formerly AEA Technology Rail (1998 - 2008)
- Higher Scientific Officer; Department for Education and Employment (1996 -1998)

Qualifications and Professional Associations

- MSc Operational Research; Lancaster University
- BSc (Hons) Maths and Management Science; University of Hull