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Mr Paul Plummer
Director, Planning and Development

Mr Robin Gisby
Director, Operations and Customer Services

Network Rail Infrastructure Limited
Kings Place, 90 York Way
London, N1 9AG

Dear Paul and Robin

Investigation into Network Rail's management of the introduction of ITPS

Your introduction of the new integrated train planning system (ITPS) for the May 2010 timetable change has not gone smoothly. This has caused First Group and Arriva Cross Country to complain to us. It is also of direct concern to us, especially given the potential impact on passenger and freight customers.

We understand that the problems encountered have included trains disappearing from the base timetable, an inability to handle portion working, operators unable to import bids electronically and delays to the publication of the national rail timetable. This has affected data quality in downstream systems such as LENNON and ORCATS and TOC reservation systems, with knock-on effects on passengers and freight customers.

We acknowledge that you are already working hard to mitigate and fix these problems, including staff working through the night to update systems manually, identifying and installing fixes and holding regular teleconferences with affected TOCs. It is important that you continue to work closely with the train operators to address these short term issues.

However, the fact remains these problems have occurred. We are therefore investigating your management of the introduction of ITPS and its impact on operators and their customers. We recognise that this needs to be examined in the context of being a cross-industry process, and you have said you will write to me setting out the issues you believe are involved.

Scope

There are three strands to our investigation:



- A** to investigate the circumstances leading up to the recent timetable problems, including the planning, testing, risk assessment and “go-live” decisions you took around ITPS;
- B** to establish the direct impact of the introduction of ITPS on train operators and their passenger and freight customers; and
- C** to review your plans for meeting your obligations in the short term *and* for ensuring these problems are not repeated in the long term (including at the December timetable change).

Form of the investigation and next steps

I would like to set up meetings with relevant people in Network Rail to discuss your detailed response on each of these three areas, and any other information you think may be relevant. I would like to hold these meetings in the first 2 weeks of June.

We recognise the importance of allowing your planners to concentrate on resolving the immediate problems, but I want to conclude our investigations as quickly as possible following this. We will therefore contact you next week to arrange the meetings and to understand what relevant documentation you have that is immediately available (specifications, risk assessments and other project plans for example).

We propose to use an independent reporter to assess the plans and other information you provide to us. In line with our usual reporter process, we will provide a draft remit to you for your comment shortly.

We will also be seeking additional information from a selection of operators.

We hope to finish our investigation by the end of June. At that stage we will consider the issues raised in light of all the evidence and will then tell you what we intend to do next.

I am copying this letter to passenger and freight train operators, Michael Roberts at ATOC, Gary Backler at DfT, Bill Reeve at Transport Scotland, Ian Brown at TfL, Tony Berkeley at RfG, Chris Scoggins at NRES and Ashwin Kumar at Passenger Focus. I will also place a copy on our website.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Michael'.

Michael Lee

A blue ink scribble or signature line consisting of a horizontal line with a small upward curve at the right end.