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**Application for directions: track access contract between Network Rail Infrastructure Limited and Great North Western Railway (GNWR) Company Limited**

Dear Ian,

Further to the meeting held at ORR offices on 5 February 2018, Network Rail committed to confirming its position on a number of points relating to the GNWR Section 17 application for rights to operate trains between London Euston and Blackpool.

**1. Capacity Assessment**

In October 2017 Network Rail was requested to provide its representations regarding GNWR's Section 17 application for quantum rights to run six trains in each direction between London Euston and Blackpool North (mid-week), starting in the Subsidiary Change Date 2019 Timetable. Network Rail provided its representations to ORR on 17 November 2017, further updating them on 22 December 2017 in response to questions raised regarding its earlier response. In its letter of 22 December 2017, Network Rail stated it did not support the sale of rights to GNWR on two grounds; the capacity could not be demonstrated for all six train slots in each direction; the impact to performance was considered to be of a sufficient concern to prevent the sale of access rights. This response outlined the detail of the capacity conflicts which prevented the sale of the full quantum of rights sought, and identified which of those rights could be supported in the event that GNWR made an alternative application for rights, subject to suitable performance mitigations being agreed.

**2. Performance Assessment**

ORR requested that Network Rail provided a clearer view of its position regarding the performance impact of these services. This led to further detailed engagement with LNW Route, and on review of the performance assessment, Network Rail was able to agree that with regard to those services where capacity had been demonstrated to exist, the performance impact was acceptable.

In more detail, our assessment indicated that where a Timetable Planning Rules compliant train slot can be created within the train plan to accommodate a GNWR service, sufficient gap can be observed in between current services (based on historic train running information) to accept the introduction of a GNWR service.

### 3. Sale of Access Rights - Passenger Train Slots

On the basis of the outputs of the capacity and performance assessments, Network Rail proposes to sell GNWR firm rights to passenger train slots as specified in Table 3.1 from Subsidiary Change Date 2019 until Principal Change Date 2026

1				2		
From	To	Via	Description	Weekday	Saturday	Sunday
London Euston	Blackpool North	Weedon, Tamworth, Madeley, Preston	1.1	5 Wednesdays Excepted 4 Wednesday only	5	4
Blackpool North	London Euston	Preston, Madeley, Tamworth, Weedon	1.2	4	5	4
Blackpool North	London Euston	Preston, Madeley, Tamworth, Weedon	1.3	1	0	0

Table 3.1 – Firm Rights Table

Network Rail proposes to sell GNWR contingent rights to additional passenger train slots as specified in Table 3.2 from Subsidiary Change Date 2019 until Principal Change Date 2026

1				2
From	To	Via	Description	Weekday
London Euston	Blackpool North	Weedon, Tamworth, Madeley, Preston	2.1	1 Wednesdays Excepted 2 Wednesday only
Blackpool North	London Euston	Preston, Madeley, Tamworth, Weedon	2.2	1

Table 3.2 – Contingent Rights Table

### 4. Calling Patterns

In respect of each service specified in column 1 of Table 4.1, Network Rail proposes to sell firm rights to the corresponding calling pattern listed in column 2 of that table. Network Rail proposes to sell contingent rights to have scheduled calls at the station set out opposite the service in column 3 of Table 4.1 being stations which do not form part of the regular calling pattern.

1				2	3
From	To	Via	Description	Regular Calling Pattern	Additional Calls
London Euston	Blackpool North	Weedon, Tamworth, Madeley, Preston	1.1	Milton Keynes Central, Nuneaton, Preston, Kirkham & Wesham, Poulton-le-Fylde	None

Blackpool North	London Euston	Preston, Madeley, Tamworth, Weedon	1.2	Poulton-le-Fylde, Kirkham & Wesham, Preston, Nuneaton, Milton Keynes Central	None
Blackpool North	London Euston	Preston, Madeley, Tamworth, Weedon	1.3	Poulton-le-Fylde, Kirkham & Wesham, Preston, Nuneaton	Milton Keynes Central

Table 4.1 Calling Patterns

## 5. GNWR – Investment in 125mph Running

Network Rail note that GNWR is committed to working towards increased linespeed above 110mph, where practicable and that it is already in discussions with LNW Route regarding investment and funding options for making the necessary changes to enable the rolling stock to perform to its full potential. Network Rail encourages this approach of investing in rolling stock and infrastructure which will allow for more efficient use of capacity in an increasingly busy network.

Network Rail is also keen to work with GNWR in the event that GNWR might seek to introduce a 125mph tilt-body train fleet which might fully utilise the potential of the route on which the services operate.

## 6. West Coast Partnership Invitation to Tender

Network Rail will inform the West Coast Partnership team at DfT of the potential sale of rights to GNWR on the grounds that it may impact on the upcoming invitation to tender for the West Coast Partnership.

## 7. Ongoing Work between Network Rail and GNWR

Network Rail commit to establishing a working group with members of GNWR, F&NPO and LNW Route to develop a series of suitable contingency plans and performance strategies prior to GNWR train operation. Network Rail LNW Route will work with GNWR to establish a series of key performance indicators which capture the required information to analyse train performance when the services are established, in the same way that it works with existing operators.

Further work will be required to assess potential solutions for the proposed contingent rights. Network Rail will work in partnership with GNWR to review the train slots with contingent rights prior to the timetable offer for the subsidiary timetable 2019.

Yours sincerely,



Daniel Fredriksson  
Customer Relationship Executive, Network Rail