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28 June 2024

Dear Emyl,

Network Rail Representations for the proposed 35th Supplemental Agreement to the Track Access Contract between Network Rail Infrastructure Limited and London North Eastern Railway Limited dated 03 March 2017.

As directed in your letter dated 30 May 2024, Network Rail is making its representations in respect of a Section 22A of the Railways Act 1993 for the 35th Supplemental Agreement (SA) of the Track Access Contract (TAC) dated 03 March 2017 between Network Rail Infrastructure Limited (Network Rail) and London North Eastern Railway Limited.

In line with ORR's letter of 24 April 2024 to the industry on 'Competing and/or complex track access applications for December 2024, May 2025 and December 2025 timetable changes', Grand Central Railway Company Limited submitted this application to the ORR on 20 May 2024 as a Section 22A.

Your letter made clear to industry that "We expect applications received by 20 May 2024 to be of sufficient quality, completeness, and certainty to enable Network Rail, industry and ORR to assess them. A prerequisite for achieving this is that applicants will have discussed their plans with, and sourced information from Network Rail before submission (in line with our guidance)."

It further "...requested that Network Rail produces a high-level plan by 05 June 2024 for ORR and industry. This will set out when it will produce its robust assessment for the applications submitted by 20 May 2024."

Network Rail fulfilled this request on 05 June 2024 outlining the plan for undertaking capacity and performance assessments to inform both Network Rail and the ORR on the applications received.

That response should be considered alongside this Representation.

In particular, it should be noted as indicated therein that:

- due to the unprecedented scale of 83 unsupported applications received at one point in time, Capacity Planning plan to phase its analysis,
- assessments will initially focus on applications and geography which do not overlap with the ongoing ECML ESG Development work to mitigate the risk of redundant analysis,
- all ECML ESG related applications will be considered following decisions as to the implementation of the ESG Timetable,

As we set out in the high-level plan; “Only those rights which potentially interact, contain the required level of information to inform assessments, were discussed with Network Rail and are intended for the next three timetable changes will be considered by Network Rail.” and that “Applications consisting of rights for geography not impacted or for later timetable changes should be considered separately.”

These factors have shaped the anticipated plan for submission of evidence related to this and other applications.

Whilst Network Rail was made aware by London North Eastern Railway Limited that they would be applying for the proposed access rights as requested in ORR’s letter, Network Rail has not yet had an opportunity to fully consider its position on this application and whether it can eventually support the proposed access rights.

ORR, in its invitation to Network Rail to make written representations, expects that Network Rail will:

- include all of the necessary information for ORR to take an informed decision; or
- to refer to all of the necessary analysis and the confirmed timelines Network Rail requires to reach its decision on the application. This should include the “5 June 2024 capacity analysis” and any other analysis Network Rail needs to complete;
- recognise which other applications within the published list of “20 May 2024 applications” could interact with each application.
- Confirm any interested persons name(s) or confirm there are no interested persons.

Network Rail can confirm that we will not be able to in this representation provide all the necessary information for ORR to make an informed decision at this point in time. However, in this representation we will address each of the points above as well as provide:

- provide an initial view of the application Form P and SA;
- where applicable, highlight if Network Rail believes that some of the access rights sought are outside the scope of the ORR’s letter dated 24 April 2024;
- an indication of how Network Rail will be able to provide its final representations and any intermediate representations so that ORR will then have all relevant information from Network Rail to assist ORR in making an informed decision.

Interested Person(s)

Network Rail is not aware of any persons who would fall within the definition of “Interested Person” in paragraph 1 of Schedule 4 of the Railways Act 1993 in relation to the application made by London North Eastern Railway Limited.

Keeping you informed

As stated in the letter to the ORR on the 05 June 2024 “The plan will need to be flexible and reviewed through the process to consider industry decisions in relation to the ECML ESG along with potentially

other changing industry priorities and requirements. For example, recommendations from the East Coast Task Force may impact on industry resources, in particular timetabling resource. This could require changes to the remaining stages of the plan, including impacting when analysis can be completed.”

In the letter we also stated “We propose establishing a change control mechanism to track changes in the plan, when and where required, to retain transparency and clarity. This may also lead to consequential changes to anticipated dates of any resulting representations planned by our customer teams.” Where such changes in timeline occur, we will notify you of any impacts on expected content, volume or timing of forthcoming information.

Where there are capacity or performance aspects of this application that will not be addressed through the high-level plan (due to lack of necessary information as indicated by ORR, or due to the focused areas of analysis being provided by the high-level plan) we will discuss below how we propose to provide the necessary information that will be required by ORR to take a decision.

Summary of Rights Sought

In their application and as a high-level summary London North Eastern Railway Limited are seeking:

- A Track Access Contract expiry date extension to Principal Change Date 2035; and
- The following access rights to commence from May 2028 Timetable:
 - 8 weekday, 8 Saturday and 7 Sunday between London King’s Cross and Leeds (with one evening peak right)
 - 8 weekday, 8 Saturday and 7 Sunday between Leeds and London King’s Cross (with one morning peak right)

Network Rail notes that the Operator currently holds these access rights as firm rights between December 2024 and their contract expiry in December 2025, however these were not Exercised for December 2024 and so are not accommodated in the New Working Timetable issued on 14 June 2024.

London North Eastern Railway Limited are also seeking:

- The addition of Class 897 tri-mode units to section 5.1 (Specified Equipment) in 10-car formation.

Industry Consultation for this application commenced on 21 May 2024, and concluded on 21 June 2024, with some operators having an extension until 28 June 2024.

The High-Level plan and Dependencies The high-level plan and dependencies

- We believe this application does not meet the criteria set out in the ORR’s letter to industry sent on 24 April 2024, as this application is due to begin in May 2028 and not associated with the December 2024, May 2025 or December 2025 timetable changes. Therefore, this application should not be assessed as part of the interacting rights workstream. However, as stated in our letter of 05 June 2024: “Where applications have been submitted outside of the timetables under review we will discuss how these should be treated on a case by case basis with ORR”.
- Assessments could commence for these proposed rights after the assessments for December 2024, May 2025 and December 2025 are completed, and dependent on any decision on infrastructure changes needed and ECML Task Force recommendations.

This along with the interacting applications matrix in Annex B, should support Network Rail in considering the application and interacting location dependencies.

We are mindful that the High-Level Plan and its analysis, or other issues indicated, may identify dependencies, risks or changes in risk profiles that could require revision or further review of individual responses. We also note the 5 June 2024 plan does not guarantee that analysis will not have to continue beyond the timetable development process. Where this is the case we will communicate with the Operator and ORR.

As stated later in this letter, if interactions occur at different points in time, i.e. different Timetable Change Dates then this could have an impact on when Network Rail will be able to submit its position with regards to the application.

Common route / regional identified considerations / constraints

This request for rights covers a point in the network where it has been identified at a regional level that more than one application should be considered by ORR at the same time as any one decision would restrict the ability to accommodate other requests due to additional firm rights directed on the ECML. The other affected operators' applications are listed in the matrix set out in Annex B.

Network Rail Review of Form P and associated documents

Network Rail has performed an initial assessment of the Form P and associated documents submitted with this application.

Network Rail would like to highlight the following:

- Within the SA:
 - o Network Rail notes the inclusion of an amendment to the Expiry Date of the Track Access Contract to Principal Change Date 2035. Network Rail assumes this is based on the Operator obtaining an extension to their Track Access Contract via its 34th SA submitted to ORR on 20 May 2024 (which extend their Track Access Contract from Principal Change Date 2025 to Principal Change Date 2030) and so would make this a further 5 year extension. Network Rail notes that both this application and the 34th SA are identified as a Section 22A though an unsupported Track Access Contract extension can only be undertaken via Section 17 of the Railways Act.
 - o We note that the firm rights requested [0.5 trains per hour (TPH)] are on top of the intended ECML ESG specification (6TPH) as listed in Schedule 5 Part C proposed for the Operator in its 34th SA.
 - o Timing load amendments: we welcome the updates of Timing Loads to class 800 to reflect the current use of rolling stock. Network Rail would like the Operator to confirm that the Class 897 rolling stock will match the Class 800 Timing Load when in 10-car formation.
 - o We note the addition of Class 897 tri-mode units to section 5.1 (Specified Equipment) in 10-car formation. Before Network Rail can accept their inclusion:
 - Network Rail would need to understand the specification for the units and would require an indicative timetable in order to undertake the necessary power modelling.
 - Network Rail would expect the Operator to undertake the necessary Compatibility / Route Clearance and Vehicle Change processes including any requirement for the testing of regenerative braking.
 - Network Rail notes that there are infrastructure dependencies required in order to facilitate these additional rights.

- Network Rail would wish to understand that the new units would be ETCS compliant (with East Coast Digital railway expected to be delivered by December 2027).
 - Within the Form P:
 - Network Rail notes that the Operator wishes an approval by Principal Change Date 2024. As stated earlier on in this letter any capacity work will be taking place after phase 5 of the high-level plan. The Operator recognises the further timetabling work required in its answer to section 9.1.
 - Network Rail notes the comment that the ESG timetable has been unable to find a solution for the 6.5 TPH as granted in the ORR direction of rights letter in May 2016 and this 35th SA seeks to add the outstanding 0.5 TPH between London and Leeds.
 - Network Rail notes that this 35th SA assumes that the 34th SA has been approved by ORR and that (either through a Section 17 direction or a Section 22 approval) the base contract is valid until December 2030.
 - Section 4.3: Network Rail notes that the intended new rolling stock (Class 897) will replace the existing old Class 91 units and the new rolling stock is expected to be more reliable.
 - Section 4.4: Network Rail would wish to work with the Operator in a similar manner to that of the ECML ESG to mitigate any impact on maintenance and renewal activity.
 - Section 5.3: Network Rail notes from the SA that the Class 897 units are in 10-car formation but this is omitted from section 5.3.

Network Rail in its initial review of the Application Form and associated documents, believe the rights sought are not in line with the specific request ORR's letter dated 24th April 2024 which "sets out how we plan to make our decisions on ["additional or amended services for the December 2024, May 2025 and December 2025 timetable changes] applications".

Network Rail will not be able to include the proposed access rights sought in the Capacity and Performance Assessments in line with the 05 June 2024 high-level plan. Assessments could commence for these proposed rights after the assessments for December 2024, May 2025 and December 2025 are complete and dependent on any factors which may impact the plan as indicated in the 05 June 2024 letter to ORR, decisions on infrastructure changes needed and ECML Task Force recommendations.

Network Rail's Initial Position on the Access Rights Sought prior to necessary assessments being completed in line with the plan

Network Rail has made every attempt in their initial assessment of the Application received to be able to inform the ORR of any early positions it might have on the access rights sought. In this instance it will not be possible in this representation for us to give an initial view, but we have outlined later in the letter the necessary assessments / analysis that need to be undertaken to inform a view.

Possible Interactions with Other Applications from 20 May 2024

As requested in ORR's invitation for Network Rail to make written representations to this application, Annex B to this letter shows where this application could interact with each of the "20 May 2024 Applications" at the previously identified locations.

Please note if the interactions occur at different points in time, i.e. different Timetable Change Dates, then this will have an impact on the dates that Network Rail will be able to submit its position with regards to the application. I.e. if the application submitted for Operator A is to commence December

2024 and there are no concerns or conflicts that does not mean that when Operator B's aspirations are considered which start in May 2025 that both will be able to be accommodated and therefore Network Rail will have to see the outputs of the capacity assessments for the May 2025 Timetable for Operator B before they can give a final position on Operator A's application.

ECML Access Rights

As the ORR is aware the members of the Industry PMO agreed in March 2024 that the ECML ESG Timetable which was planned for December 2024, would be deferred pending further development work. Considering this, we are reviewing the requirement for continuation of our previous approach to access rights on the ECML. We expect to be able to communicate further with the industry and the ORR in the near future of our position on this.

In addition, any new or amended rights (which change capacity parameters) whether contingent or firm which are being sought in those 20 May 2024 Applications on the ECML, as stated previously and in line with the 5th June letter from Network Rail to the ORR, Network Rail will not be able to make decisions on this until decisions on ECML are made following consideration by the industry ECML Task Force. It is recognised for those operators who have bid for paths on the ECML for the December 2024 Timetable and they have been offered back to the Operator at D-26 Network Rail will have to consider the support of access rights in the interim only.

This application seeks to move existing firm rights applicable from December 2024 back to start in May 2028 which are additional to the quantum planned to be delivered through the ECML ESG that may be being implemented in May 2025 or December 2025.

Allowing business continuity while preserving freedom of action for ORR in taking its decision

Our letter of 05 June 2024 stated that in this interim period Network Rail will have to balance the need for business continuity, so that current services may continue to operate and timetable changes can be made when there is low risk of negative outcomes for passengers and freight users, with the need to avoid prejudicial decisions that could unduly favour one party where aspirations interact.

We note that some operators have split their applications across different timetable periods, which already provides ORR with the ability to deal specifically with the nearer-term applications now, whereas others have combined different timetable periods in a single application.

Should ORR wish to make a single decision on each application it has received, without breaking that application into parts, then, where a single application has been made relating to multiple timetable periods, there is a risk that rights might not be available in time for an operator to commence services as early as it would like, given the need for all of the information set out in our plans to be available in order for decisions to be made relating to those future timetables.

Where paths associated with some of the quantum rights in this application are included in a New Working Timetable issued under the Network Code Part D process, then Network Rail proposes to work with the applicant on these elements of the application. Our aim, subject to normal governance processes, would be to potentially agree a new Section 22 application for contingent, time-limited rights for that timetable period with no presumption of continuity – in line with the approach that ORR has supported for applications on the ECML in recent years.

This would enable you to reserve your position on future capacity choices, allowing decisions that relate to a later timetable period to be made simultaneously, while making effective use of the railway network in the earlier timetable periods.

Conclusion

Network Rail is aware that this representation letter does not contain all the information needed for this application for the ORR to make a decision. As explained in our letter of 05 June, these representations letters were mostly expected to reserve our position pending the outcome of the capacity and performance assessments. We are also mindful that the plan and its analysis may identify dependencies, risks or changes in risk profiles that could require revision or further review of this response. However, we hope that the plans we provided give you the reassurance that we will assess this application to inform Network Rail's position in a later representation in line with the plan and letter. In addition, Network Rail wants to give the ORR the confidence that we have made every effort in this letter to give any initial views where we can.

Network Rail asks that while we carry out our assessments, ORR progresses with its own assessments wherever possible to assist in making early decisions/ descoping the scale of applications requiring assessment from Network Rail. Additionally, where we have deemed an application for December 2024 or May 2025 to be unready in the initial representations in this letter, we ask that this be descoped from the analysis requirements as quickly as possible.

Network Rail will continue to keep ORR sighted on the progress of the plan for this application.

Yours sincerely,

Mark Garner
Customer Manager,
Eastern Region, Network Rail

Annex A – Plan for Information / Analysis / Assessment

Details of Information / Analysis / Assessment	NOTES
<i>High Level Phases from 5th June 2024 Plan</i>	
Phase 1 Collation & Scoping	Please refer to our letter of June 5th
Phase 2 Risk Identification for May 2025	Please refer to our letter of June 5th
Phase 3 May 2025 Production Development Period	Please refer to our letter of June 5th
Phase 4a - (ECML confirmed for December 2025) – focusing on December 2025	Please refer to our letter of June 5th
Phase 4b - (ECML confirmed for May 2025) – focussing on December 2025	Please refer to our letter of June 5th
Phase 5 – December 2025 Production Period	Please refer to our letter of June 5th
<i>Further Route / Function Analysis / Assessments / Information</i>	
Phase 1 Power modelling – complete list of relevant applications and agree remit	Refer to Annex C
Phase 2 Power modelling –	Refer to Annex C
Vehicle Change	Refer to Annex C

Annex B – Interacting Applications Matrix

Operator/Application/Type				A - WCML south	B - Birmingham	C - BHM-Derby	D - Derby-Sheffield	E - Sheffield	F - ECML&Leeds	G - Oxford	H - Gloucester	I - Cardiff
	Dec-24	May-25	Dec-25									
Colas 10th SA 22a	x	x	x			x	x	x	x			x
DBC 72nd SA 22a	x	x	x				x	x	x			
DBC 73rd SA 22a	x	x	x					x	x			
DBC 79th SA 22a	x	x	x			x			x	x		x
DBC 81st SA 22a	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
DBC 86th SA 22a	x	x	x					x	x			
DBC 87th SA 22a	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x		x	x
DBC 88th SA 22a	x	x	x				x	x	x			
DBC 70th SA 22	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x		
GBRf 34th SA 22a	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	
GBRf 25th SA 22a	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		
GBRf 28th SA 22	x	x	x	x					x			
GBRf 41st SA 22A	x	x	x						x			
Varamis 2nd SA 22a	x	x	x	x	x				x			
CrossCountry UC, Hydra, Stansted 17	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
FLIM 25th SA 22A	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x		
DRS 17th SA 22A	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x
EMR 21st SA 22A	x	x	x				x	x	x			
FLHH 25th SA 22A	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
FLHH 26th SA 22A	x	x	x				x	x	x			
FLHH 27th SA 22A	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
FLHH 28th SA 22A	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x
FLIM 24th SA 22A	x	x	x	x	x	x			x			
FLIM 26th SA 22A	x	x	x	x			x	x	x	x		
Govia Thames Railway 62nd SA 22A	x	x	x						x			
Grand Central 24th SA 22A	x	x	x						x			
Hull Trains 28th SA 22A	x	x	x						x			
Hull Trains 29th SA 22A	x	x	x						x			
LNER 37th SA 22A	x	x	x						x			
LNER 38th SA 22A	x	x	x						x			
Lumo 11th SA 22A	x	x	x						x			
Northern 57th SA 22	x	x	x					x	x			
Scotrail 49th SA 22a	x	x	x						x			
TPT 58th SA 22a	x	x	x					x	x			

Govia Thames Railway 63rd SA 22A			X	X						X			
Grand Central 28th SA 22A			X	X						X			
Hull Trains 27th SA 22A			X	X					X	X			
LNER 34th SA 22A			X	X						X			
LNER 36th SA 22A			X	X						X			
Lumo 12th SA 22A			X	X						X			
Northern 59th SA 22a			X	X					X	X			
Northern 60th SA 22a			X	X					X	X			
Scotrail 50th SA 22a			X	X						X			
TPT 62nd SA 22a			X	X						X			
TPT 63rd SA 22a			X	X						X			
Alliance Rail Cardiff - Edinburgh 17				X		X	X	X	X	X		X	X
EMR 19th SA 22A				X						X			
LIS 2nd SA 22a				X						X			
Scotrail 51st SA 22a				X						X			
TPT 64th SA 22a				X					X	X			
TPT 65th SA 22a				X						X			
LNER 35th SA 22A May '28										X			

Annex C – Eastern Region high-level plan extract

Final list of applications Dec 2024 - 2025 timetable change					Where applicable to the application												
Application	Section	Details	Timetable change	Lead route	Train length, weight, routing and rolling stock confirmed in app	High level plan phases potentially relevant	Power modelling required	Level Crossing assessment required	Signaller workload assessment required	Platform/train interface risk assessment required	Compatibility / Route Clearance required	Vehicle Change required	Route opening / EAS (section 4) check required	Track maintenance impact	ETCS fitment required for ECDP	Vegetation clearance risk re bi-modes	Depot and stabling requirements
LNER 35th	22A	SCD 28 London - Leeds, additional 0.5tph	May-28	Eastern	Yes	Phase 1 - 5	Under review	Under review	Under review	Under review	Under review	Under review	Under review	Under review	Under review	Under review	Under review

Eastern Region has reviewed this application through its initial assurance sessions and is taking forward the relevant actions that will be tracked through the Regional High-Level Plan.

Eastern will be utilising all relevant intelligence gathered as part of the ECML ESG workstream to assist with its ongoing assessment and assurance activities.

Where an application has any additional rolling stock requirements, these will need to be fully assessed as part of the Eastern Region power modelling workstream and align with cross-route power modelling in other Network Rail regions.

As previously highlighted through this representations letter and the 05 June 2024 letter to the ORR, we may as we progress, identify dependencies, risks or changes that could result in a change to the plans or activities identified.