Oliver Stewart
RAIB Recommendation Handling Manager
T: 020 7282 3864
M: 07710069402
E-mail oliver.stewart@orr.gov.uk

3 November 2021

Mr Andrew Hall
Deputy Chief Inspector of Rail Accidents
Cullen House
Berkshire Copse Rd
Aldershot
Hampshire GU11 2HP

Dear Andrew,

RAIB Report: Signal passed at danger at Loughborough South Junction, Leicestershire on 26 March 2020

I write to report[1] on the consideration given and action taken in respect of the recommendation addressed to ORR in the above report, published on 9 November 2020.

The annex to this letter provides details of actions taken in response to the recommendation and the status decided by ORR. The status of recommendation 1 is **'Implemented'.**

We do not propose to take any further action in respect of the recommendation, unless we become aware that any of the information provided has become inaccurate, in which case I will write to you again.

We will publish this response on the ORR website on 4 November 2021.

Yours sincerely,

Oliver Stewart

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[1] In accordance with Regulation 12(2)(b) of the Railways (Accident Investigation and Reporting) Regulations 2005

Initial consideration by ORR

1.   The recommendation was addressed to ORR when the report was published on 9 November 2020.

2.   After considering the recommendation, ORR passed it to Rail Operations Group asking them to consider and where appropriate act upon them and advise ORR of its conclusions. The consideration given to the recommendation is included below.

3.   This annex identifies the correspondence with end implementers on which ORR's decision has been based.

Recommendation 1

The intent of this recommendation is to ensure that ROG's safety management system, including the new procedures that it has put in place as a result of this incident, is not undermined by an undetected lack of organisational compliance with those processes.

Rail Operations Group should review its management assurance processes relating to operational safety, and take steps to ensure effective monitoring, auditing and management review of its safety arrangements in areas including, but not limited to, the competence management of operational staff, traffic acceptance, and general operating instructions (in line with recognised good industry practice)

ORR decision

4.   ROG has reviewed its management assurance processes as part of a wider review of its SMS prompted by the Improvement Notice issued by ORR following the SPAD incident.

5.   ROG has reviewed its Traffic Acceptance Process and as a result of which new documentation has been created, including the issue of 'flow briefs' to ensure that all of the relevant information is identified and provided to their frontline staff. The processes for delivery of documentation to the frontline team has been reviewed and measures implemented to improve the control of both the delivery and receipt of this information.

6.   To improve competence management and training, ROG has Introduced new systems including the ASSURE system for the management of competence and the AARK system for the management of route and traction knowledge. Basic and refresher training programs have been reviewed and revised, and a new course has been developed to assist in the ongoing competence of ROG assessors.

7.   Operational standards and instructions have been reviewed, with revisions made accordingly. ROG will continue to review operational standards and instructions on an ongoing basis, taking into account feedback from our frontline staff, lessons learned from events and other operational experience/learning identified from across the industry.

8.   To assess compliance with the RAIB recommendation we have reviewed ROG's operational safety management and have concluded that the revised arrangements address the recommendation.

9.   After reviewing the information provided ORR has concluded that, in accordance with the Railways (Accident Investigation and Reporting) Regulations 2005, ROG has:

- taken the recommendation into consideration; and

- has taken action to implement it

Status: Implemented.

Information in support of ORR decision

10.   On 21 January 2021 Rail Operations Group provided the following initial response:

Firstly I can confirm that Rail Operations Group accepts the recommendation and has undertaken appropriate action to address the issues identified within it.

It is also worth noting that this recommendation aligns with the schedule / intent of the Improvement Notice issued by Inspector Darling to Rail Operations Group following his investigation into this incident, and which has been identified as having been complied with.

We have undertaken a series of actions, that have been discussed previously with Inspector Darling, starting with a full review of our Traffic Acceptance Process, as a result of which new documentation has been created, including the issue of 'flow briefs', to ensure that all of the relevant information is identified and provided to our frontline staff.

We have introduced a number of new systems including the ASSURE system for the management of competence, and the AARK system for the management of route and traction knowledge. These electronic database systems have enabled us to improve both the delivery of our arrangements, and increased the ability to monitor / audit these activities on an ongoing basis with regular reports provided to our management meetings.

We have reviewed and revised our basic and refresher training programs, and developed a new course to assist in the ongoing competence of our assessors.

A full review has been undertaken of our suite of operational standards and instructions with revisions made accordingly, and whilst we believe that this work has addressed the above concerns we continue to review our operational standards and instructions on an ongoing basis, taking into account feedback from our frontline staff, lessons learnt from events, both internal and external and other operational experience / learning identified from across the industry.

Further to the above I can confirm that we have reviewed our processes for the delivery of documentation to our frontline team and have implemented measures to improve the control of both the delivery, and receipt of this information. We are also trialling a new system, known as 'SmartBrief', which we hope to implement shortly which will improve further on the above processes.

Rail Operations Group have provided the following documents:

ORR Review - Document Screensh

Fw Safety brief extract.msg

Assure CMS.docx