

Grand Union

Gianmaria Cutrupi

Aspirant Open Access Operators Manager

Network Rail Infrastructure Ltd

Copy:

Emyl Lewicki

Track Access Manager

ORR

20 December 2023

Dear Gian,

Grand Union Trains, Section 17 Application, London Euston-Stirling

Thank you for the Network Rail response regarding our updated application. As Network Rail is aware the reasoning behind the changes were based on a number of factors. One was the difficulty in sourcing new build bi-mode trains in a reasonable timeframe alongside the ongoing issues of power supply on parts of the route, which continue to be unresolved due to financial restraints.

In its reply to the previous consultation Network Rail stated that it was supportive of the access right applications for Grand Union Trains proposed services between London Euston and Stirling with a start date of May'25 and expiry date of December 2030 on the basis any rolling stock will have performance characteristics that meet or outperform the rolling stock used to develop the current train paths.

GRAND UNION TRAINS LIMITED

Riverside Lodge, Fulford, YORK, YO19 4RB -

Registered Office: Fulford Lodge, 1 Heslington Lane, Fulford, YORK, YO10 4HW -

A Company registered in England & Wales No: 11408012 -

www.granduniontrains.com

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The original timings were based upon Grand Union operating with Class 91 in 2+7 formation operating at 110mph. This was later amended to be a Class 93, but the continued power supply problems render that, and also a bi-mode, unachievable while power supply issues remain. The current application is planned to utilise a 221 or 222 trainset.

It is likely, based on current work being undertaken on the introduction of the AT300 series for Avanti, that EPS speeds may be achievable for non-tilting EMU/DMU stock which would enable Grand Union 222s to operate at 125 mph if the service is approved. The Class 221 is able to use EPS speeds currently.

In all respects the Class 222 (even at 110 mph) and Class 221 outperform a Class 91 in acceleration at anything other than high speeds, so departure from stations or during unscheduled stops will see an improvement in train performance. I am therefore not clear as to the reasoning why Network Rail has an issue on this matter.

The issue that rolling stock changes may present capacity issues due to required flexing is more to do with Network Rail continuing to 'erode' paths post the WCML ESG timetable output - a point previously noted with concern by colleagues at Avanti - rather than with a rolling stock change.

The comment regarding Carstairs is surely an error. Is Network Rail really suggesting that its support for this application completely overlooked the major improvements being undertaken?

Grand Union would also point out the very extended timescales proposed by Network Rail in addressing this matter, where weeks and months are quoted for work that in reality should take a few days.

Regards

Ian Yeowart

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