

**CALEDONIAN
SLEEPER**

A unique way to travel

Sophie Grieves
Customer Manager
Network Rail

By email
CC Emyl Lewicki, Track Access Manager ORR

30 July 2024

Dale Williams

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Dear Sophie,

Caledonian Sleeper Limited (CSL) response to Network Rail's representations regarding its application for an amended calling pattern for London to Inverness services to include Birmingham International from SCD 2025

I write in response to your letter of 28 June 2024 providing Network Rail's representations in respect of the above.

I note by way of background regarding the status of our application summarised in your letter that Caledonian Sleeper's section 17 application for a Track Access Extension from PCD 2024- PCD 2030 using existing rights in Table 2.1 and Table 2.2 is now in the course of being submitted to ORR for final approval, whereupon our application in respect of the revised calling pattern for London to Inverness services will be converted into a Section 22A application.

Subsequent to your letter, it was advised that Network Rail was no longer able to support the inclusion of firm platform occupation rights for Southbound arrivals at Euston in Table 9.1 of Schedule 5 within the above extension, as this required to be considered as part of the process for completing/complex track access applications and it has therefore been agreed that these rights will now also be considered as part of our Section 22A application. As your letter only made representations regarding the Birmingham International aspect of our application, our response will similarly focus on this issue. However, it would be helpful to see Network Rail's views concerning the platform occupation rights element of our application in due course.

NR's process and position on our application

You have noted that the representations letters have mainly served at this stage to reserve NR's position pending the outcome of detailed capacity and performance assessments that will be undertaken by NR, plus review of related dependencies such as power and safety. As a general position, CSL is happy to support Network Rail in undertaking such assessments with such further input and information as may be required, in line with the generally good and collaborative discussions we have had on such matters to date. The feedback that we have had from other operators concerning this application has generally been supportive, but has sought additional assurance on certain performance and capacity concerns which can only be addressed, in CSL's view, by Network Rail's assessments of the above matters being undertaken.



Whilst we have generally had constructive engagement with Network Rail and good support from our customer representative team regarding our application to date, we also generally recognise and support the ORR's feedback to Network Rail regarding the issues related to this process identified in its letter of 22 July 2024, in particular the following points:

- **Defining the process and timescales for undertaking capacity and performance analysis**, plus the inputs required from CSL to support that programme of work.
- **Identifying conflicts with respect to access applications using the same capacity**. This seems particularly applicable to CSL's application, given our application relates to a single train per day operating outwith the busiest periods of demand on the network. In this regard, whilst NR's initial representations on our application identifies other operators' applications relating to the same location at the network, it seems to us that it will ultimately be more relevant and useful in assessing our application to be able to identify the extent to which there is any conflict between our application and either other operator's existing rights, or new applications.
- **Expediting applications based on categorisation of the extent of conflict with existing rights/new applications**. Related to the above point, we would be keen to understand where NR considers that CSL's application falls in terms of the potential to expedite the application in the event that analysis determines it can be accommodated on the network without conflicting with existing rights/new applications. As NR points out in its representations, CSL operates on a 12 month advanced booking window and therefore any delays in decisions on access rights and timetable amendments has a particular impact on our business.

With respect to specific queries/observations that we have identified within NR's letter for feedback at this stage:

- NR have requested confirmation that Scottish Rail Holdings are supportive of this change, given the proposed amendments to Euston timings associated with this proposal. We can confirm that Bill Reeve, Director of Rail at Transport Scotland and John MacQuarrie the Rail Business Director at SRH have both been briefed and are both supportive in principle of this initiative. As NR will appreciate, the timings we have submitted are only aspirational at this stage and we would work through the specific details of any consequential changes to the service timings on the Grant Agreement once we have more detailed feedback from NR through the timetable development process.

- NR have asked to understand the methodology behind our proposed timings for calling points as relates to right time:

Our proposed timings are purely aspirational, and are indicative of what we believe could be possible. However, with no sight of the timetable of all operators, these cannot be verified in any way. That said, the specifics for pathing are covered through Part D of the Network Code.

- NR have queried in the context of Right Time performance whether:
 - We will always stop at BI whether guests are prebooked for the service; and
 - If CSL are not looking to stop at BI if no guests are booked the anticipated implication of this on right time performance measurements

Caledonian Sleeper may choose to skip Birmingham International in the event of late running and there being no guests booked, likely by diverting via the Trent Valley to get maximum benefit. If we have guests booked for Birmingham, a contingency plan will be documented which will consider the volume of guests and the extent of the delay.

In the event that we do not call at Birmingham International, this would constitute a fail to stop and therefore a part cancellation.



- NR have noted the need to undertake a risk assessment process and develop a Method of Working Statement based on the fact that the platforms at Birmingham International are not long enough to fully accommodate the Sleeper Service.

Caledonian Sleeper calls at 42 different stations as part of its operating model. There are less than 10 where the entire train fits on the physical platform, and as such our train is fitted with an Automatic Selective Door Opening (ASDO) system which we use very night. Birmingham International would be added to our ASDO database and we would operate in a similar fashion to many other locations. In addition, CSL would, as it does for all stations, carry out a full station and PTI risk assessment prior to calling there.

Conclusion

I trust the above satisfies the queries raised in the letter from Network Rail, and I would be happy to discuss any of the above points in more detail.

I look forward to hearing from Network Rail in due course.

Kind Regards,

Dale Williams, Head of Operations
Caledonian Sleeper Limited
[REDACTED]