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Rachel Gilliland
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Network Rail Infrastructure Limited
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4 Travis Street
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Nigel Oatway
Access Manager

Dear Rachel,

28 April 2015

**PROPOSED TRACK ACCESS CONTRACT BETWEEN NETWORK RAIL
INFRASTRUCTURE LIMITED AND GREAT NORTH WESTERN RAILWAY COMPANY
LIMITED**

I am writing in regard to the e-mail dated 14 April 2015 from Rebecca Stonehouse inviting the comments of DB Schenker Rail (UK) Limited ('DB Schenker') on the above proposed agreement which is intended to support the operation of a number of high-speed passenger trains between Queens Park/London Euston and Blackpool due to commence in December 2017.

DB Schenker notes that the proposed agreement has been agreed with Network Rail on a "quantum only" rights basis between Queens Park and Blackpool and return with contingent rights to operate to/from London Euston. DB Schenker also notes that the commencement of the proposed services is dependent on the timely completion of the infrastructure enhancement scheme electrifying the route between Blackpool North and Preston as well as the procurement, acceptance and commissioning of new rolling stock.

Notwithstanding the successful completion of the above mentioned issues, in order for DB Schenker to be content with the proposals it will need to be assured that the proposed additional trains and the way they are operated do not adversely impact on either its own services or on route capacity which could unduly inhibit the future growth of freight services on the West Coast Main Line ("WCML"), a key artery for the movement of rail freight across the UK. With this in mind, DB Schenker acknowledges the remarks in section 3.1 of the application form stating that as *"...rights sought are for a quantum of services, it is not appropriate (nor is it possible) to include a detailed timetable to demonstrate how the available capacity will be used"*.

However, whilst DB Schenker recognises that the access rights sought are described as "quantum only", they still include characteristics such as calling patterns and routing which will still place certain limitations on flexibility. It is not clear, for example, why the services require Firm Rights to be routed via Weedon. In addition, given the remarks in section 4.1 of the application form along with the indicative timetable information, it appears that the timings of the services have in fact already been identified as it is stated that the services *"...are planned to operate making use of one of the hourly paths on the WCML that*

Network Rail has identified" and these paths are indicated in the timetabling information supplied. If this is the case, therefore, DB Schenker questions how Network Rail can have identified those paths being available without an understanding of the effects the proposed services would have on other trains on the WCML.

Consequently, DB Schenker presumes that some indicative timetabling must have been carried out even on a 'standard hour' basis to enable Network Rail to have satisfied itself that the proposed services can operate without adversely impacting on other services. If so, can this indicative timetabling work be provided? Or, if not, can Network Rail explain how it arrived at the conclusion that the proposed services could be accommodated even on a 'quantum only' basis without unduly affecting other services on the WCML? Whilst hoping that it can be persuaded otherwise, DB Schenker remains concerned that the spare hourly path that has been identified will adversely compromise capacity, particularly at the southern end of the WCML that is vital to accommodating future freight growth.

DB Schenker also understands that Network Rail has recently declared its intent to create a "Zero Defect" timetable plan, which will involve more rigorous application of the Timetable Planning Rules than has hitherto been the case. If so, at the very least DB Schenker assumes that this would require any previous capacity work carried out to assess future proposals (including these proposed services) to be reviewed.

In addition, and at a more detailed level, DB Schenker is concerned over certain aspects of the proposal to terminate and commence the proposed services at Queens Park. Whilst it understands that Queens Park is not the destination of choice for GNWR, the fact remains that the proposed Firm Rights will enable such operations to be carried out should it not be possible to extend the proposed services through to London Euston for whatever reason.

To allow DB Schenker to assess whether or not termination/commencement of journeys at Queens Park will impact on freight movements in the area, DB Schenker will need to understand issues such as the length of platform occupation (particularly when detraining in the Up direction) and whether that occupation utilises a currently recognised freight slot between the Wembley area and the North London Line. If so, then this would likely result in more freight services being required to operate via Hampstead Tunnel which would increase journey time in comparison with the Primrose Hill route thereby reducing capacity for other freight flows that are captive to the Hampstead Tunnel route (e.g. those services from Acton or the West London Line travelling to/from the Anglia route).

Although some helpful information has been provided in this regard, (i.e. that the trains will be recessed between passenger workings in Kilburn Up and Down Goods Loop for between 15 and 40 minutes), details of the required station dwell time at Queens Park remains uncertain and whether this would be lengthened, for example, by train cleaning/tanking activity that may not be able to be carried out in Kilburn Up and Down Goods Loop.

In conclusion, therefore, whilst DB Schenker is grateful for the information that has been provided in the application, unfortunately such information remains insufficient to enable DB Schenker to assess with any degree of certainty or assurance the effects of the proposals on its concerns expressed above. DB Schenker is of course willing to work closely with Network Rail and GNWR to address its concerns once sufficient detailed timetabling information does become available.

Yours sincerely,



Nigel Oatway
Access Manager

cc.	Jonathan Cooper	Alliance Rail
	David Young	Network Rail
	Mike Pybus	Network Rail

