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22nd May 2015

Dear Nigel,

Section 18 Application: Great North Western Railway (GNWR)

Thank you for your response dated 28th April to the consultation on GNWR's proposed Section 18 track access application. For clarity, this Section 18 application is for a reduced number of rights contained in the previous applications made by Alliance on the 28th October 2010, 7th December 2011, 17th February 2012 and 11th June 2014..

You state that the proposed agreement has been agreed with Network Rail on 'quantum' only basis and is dependent on the timely completion of certain infrastructure enhancement schemes. To clarify the only infrastructure schemes required for these services to operate is the electrification of the route between Blackpool and Preston. The major schemes on the WCML such as Norton Bridge does release further capacity however these proposals are not dependant on this being completed.

Regarding your comments on timetabling, the ORR has asked Network Rail to indicate capacity at a high level rather than developing a specific timetable. The reason for this is to free up capacity as part of a timetable recast and take full advantage of greater flexibility in contracts to optimise the timetable. In addition Network Rail has undertaken a number of detailed capacity studies since the original application was made in 2010. Network Rail is satisfied that the GNWR proposals can be comfortably accommodated on the network.

You comment that you require assurance that GNWR operations will not adversely impact on route capacity such that it becomes ossified that the future growth in freight services could become unduly constrained. Strategic freight paths protect routes where a growth in freight is envisaged and so any future growth is protected by this. The Strategic Capacity Statement as you know is still in development, and more paths need to be input to it to reach 2023 requirements on sections of the WCML. However, the latest WCML Capacity Report produced by Network Rail identified an additional 3 paths per hour on WCML, of which it is selling 1 every 2 hours to GNWR. This spare capacity coupled with the work being

undertaken between Network Rail and the Freight Operators to release unused freight capacity, and in conjunction with the fact that the rights sought by GNWR are quantum only, should provide adequate capacity to realise future freight growth.

With regard to your comments about Queens Park (London) GNWR would prefer to operate trains to Euston rather than Queen's Park. However, Network Rail is currently unable to agree to firm rights to operate into Euston owing to the uncertainty surrounding changes to the station in connection with the development for HS2. GNWR believes it is more likely now that off-peak access to Euston will be possible, at least between 2017 and 2022. However, until this is more certain, GNWR has to work on the assumption that another terminus is required.

Queen's Park, offers the following:

- existing Slow Line platforms
- a turn-back facility (the Up and Down Kilburn Goods Loop)
- good interchange with London Underground and Overground services.

If GNWR needs to use Queen's Park for a significant period (i.e. other than for a period of engineering works) it is prepared to invest in facilities and staff to enhance the station and access to/from over train services. Initial discussions with London Underground have been held and there is no fundamental issue preventing use of the station. More detailed discussions about the nature of the facilities required are planned.

Network Rail has examined GNWR's proposals and accepts that, subject to adjusting a London Midland train within existing contractual flex, there is at least one path an hour into and out of Queen's Park, including time to enter/exit the Kilburn Loop. Off peak, this will have no significant impact on performance. The planned station dwell will be 4 minutes and I can confirm there will be no train cleaning/ tanking activity at Queens Park or the loop.

Yours sincerely,



Rachel Gilliland

Head of Commercial Freight