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Rachel Gilliland
Head of Commercial Freight
Network Rail
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7 April 2015

Dear Rachel,

Section 17 Application by East Coast Trains Ltd for Open Access services on the East Coast Main Line

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the above application.

XC Trains Limited (XCTL) is not able to support the application at present, and we request further information in order to assess it more fully.

From the information provided to us, it is not clear how the East Coast Trains Ltd. proposal would be accommodated in the timetable, and what the impact on other operators' services, including those of XCTL, would be. The application cites Network Rail's ECML 2020 Capacity Report, issued on 17 December 2014, as evidence that there is sufficient capacity for the proposed new services. However this report did not take account of XCTL's existing service between the South West and Scotland via the ECML, so does not provide the necessary information to assess whether the suggested eight LDHS services each hour to and from London Kings Cross could be accommodated alongside our current operations. XCTL requires assurance that the proposed East Coast Trains Ltd. service would not impede our ability to continue to operate our current quantum of service on the ECML.

XCTL already experiences seriously sub-optimal journey times on the Birmingham – North East – Scotland corridor, and improvement of these journey times is one of our key aspirations, in order to better meet our customers' needs and to make more efficient use of network capacity. In the absence of any evidence to the contrary, we are concerned that approval of this application, and the consequent addition of more trains to an already busy line, would jeopardise our ability to improve these journey times and may even make them worse.

On receipt of further information that adequately addresses these points, XCTL will be able to take a more informed position on this application.

Yours sincerely,

David Fletcher
Timetable Strategy Manager

Part of Arriva – a DB company

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