



East Coast Main Line Company Limited
East Coast House, 25 Skeldergate
York YO1 6DH

virgintrainseastcoast.com

Sharon Kelly
Interim Managing Director
DB Regio Tyne and Wear Limited
Metro Depot
Cheswick Drive
Gosforth
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE3 5DG

27 March 2015

Dear Sharon,

RE: 49th Supplemental Agreement (Sunderland)

Thank you for your letter dated 28 February. The purpose of this letter is to respond to the questions you raised.

Virgin Trains East Coast (VTEC) does not believe that the proposed services will impact on the current DB Regio Tyne & Wear (DBTW) Metro operation, indeed, the timing of these new services have been specifically designed not to impact on DBTW. VTEC is aware that Nexus holds access rights for up to 6 services per hour. VTEC's proposal is for contingent rights only, that is, your access rights take priority.

VTEC is aware of the firm rights and limited flex contained within the Track Access Agreement for DBTW services. VTEC does not believe that its proposals would have any impact on DBTW's firm rights. In any event, given that VTEC is seeking contingent rights only, VTEC does not understand how its proposal could impact DBTW's firm rights.

VTEC proposes to operate the new service using 2+9 high speed trains (HSTs). These trains are 247 metres in length which is longer than the platforms at Sunderland (by approximately 2 coach lengths). In addition, the leading Power Car would be off the platform. We are working with industry partners, and Network Rail in particular, to agree a solution for the safe operation of a VTEC train at Sunderland. From various site visits and a test train on 22 February, we have identified the need to build a walking route for drivers - this will be approximately 67 metres in length at the south end of the station. In terms of other matters at Sunderland, it would be necessary for Northern Rail staff to isolate the fire alarm sensors at platform level while a VTEC train is occupying the platform, in the same way they do for Grand Central services.

VTEC is committed to working with the industry to develop and agree locally agreed contingency rights for the operation at Sunderland. This collaborative approach worked well for our test train on 22 February and VTEC would be delighted to continue to work with DBTW in such a way going forwards.



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The proposed services would require a longer dwell time than 5 minutes. We have bid for 15 minutes in the morning (0525-0540) and 17 minutes in the evening (2320-2337). There are no conflicts in the morning but in the evening this would require the re-platforming of a DBTW service and we expect Operational Planning in Network Rail to find an operational solution to allow trains to run.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Phil Dawson'.

Phil Dawson
Regulation & Track Access Manager

cc Mark Garner, Network Rail
David Reed, ORR
James Farnell-Smith, Nexus