



OFFICE OF RAIL REGULATION

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Hazel Walker
Group Company Secretary
Network Rail Infrastructure Limited
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cc Rail Industry Planning Group members

Dear Hazel

Revised RUS guidelines

Following our review of Network Rail's network licence, I attach our revised RUS guidelines issued under condition 1.8 of the new licence.

There are three main reasons for the changes to the RUS guidelines. We needed to update the guidelines to reflect the changes to the licence. We also wanted to take the opportunity to make the guidelines more flexible so that RUSs can adapt as the planning process develops. And we have made other changes to make them clearer and more readable.

We have made changes to the licence to make the licence more purpose driven. In particular, we have moved some of the detailed obligations and procedural requirements about RUSs from the licence into these guidelines. The guidelines have therefore been amended to include important process details about the way a RUS is established and about how (and on what grounds) we may object to a RUS.

The only substantive change we have made to these arrangements is to say that we now want stakeholders to send us their comments on a proposed RUS within 30 days of its publication by Network Rail, rather than within 60 days. This change is to allow us proper time to consider those views before the 60 day period during which we may object to a



RUS expires; the 60 day objection period is the same one that applied under the old guidelines.

We expect RUSs will play an increasingly important role in the planning of the industry. RUSs will need to evolve if they are to fulfil their potential and properly support the planning agenda. This might include producing RUSs more quickly, partial updates, or RUSs looking at broader geographical areas or topics. The guidelines need to allow sufficient flexibility for RUSs to do this, and we have changed them accordingly.

We have also made some drafting changes and added additional material about the basis for deciding whether to update a RUS, and we have tried to use plainer English throughout.

We consulted Rail Industry Planning Group members on the changes, including Network Rail. We received one response from Passenger Focus. Passenger Focus was broadly content with the proposals and had no objections. But it did raise one point in relation to the reduction in the 'objection' period for a final RUS from 60 days to 30 days: it said that if this was to happen then it was important for Network Rail to highlight any substantial or significant changes from the consultation draft. For example, the draft invites views on services entering terminal X while the final version has decided to recommend terminal Y. In such cases consultees will not have had a chance to comment on the suitability of the change. Passenger Focus said that it was good practice to highlight changes in any event but that the reduced timeframe for comments made it all the more important that this was done.

We think the suggestion that changes between a draft and a final RUS should be highlighted to focus stakeholder representations within the 30 days is a good one. We have also clarified paragraph 20 of the guidelines, and briefly set out why we want stakeholders to send us their comments on a proposed RUS within 30 days of its publication by Network Rail.

We look forward to working with you on the forthcoming review of your RUS manual.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Larkinson', written over a light blue horizontal line.

John Larkinson