

**By email only**

Department for Transport,  
Network Rail,  
Class Representative Committee

28 July 2023

**Timetable reform and passenger information**

1. I wrote to Network Rail and the Department for Transport (DfT) in [December 2022](#) regarding the reform of rail timetable production. A structured process continues to be important for industry and freight customer business certainty, as well as for the Informed Traveller commitments, which provide rail passengers confidence in researching and booking tickets. Furthermore, we recognise non-compliance with existing processes does not benefit most people's interests.
2. The Better Timetables for Passengers and Freight (BTPF) programme has progressed its proposal for new timetable change dates in June, October and an optional third in February by consensus. The proposal also introduces new bid and offer timescales for the timetable production process, culminating in the publication of a draft timetable 12 weeks before services run, and a confirmed timetable 8 weeks before services run. A proposal to change the Network Code (PfC 120) was approved by the industry Class Representative Committee, subject to confirmation of compliance with the *Railways (Access, Management and Licensing of Railways Undertakings) Regulations 2016*, (the Regulations) and modification of Network Rail's network licence "T-12" condition.
3. In April 2023, ORR launched an initial consultation on modifying the licence requirement for Network Rail to produce a timetable "not less than 12 weeks" before services run. Further to this consultation, we do not intend to proceed with the modification to Network Rail's licence at the current time. Further evidence and understanding of the practical impact on passengers are required from changing the T-12 requirement. This also includes the need for industry to explain to passengers how booking tickets will relate to timetable production under the proposal (see consultation decision on ORR [website](#)).
4. To address issues with its current proposals, Network Rail has agreed to produce further evidence. We consider that this requires Network Rail to work with train operators to produce that evidence, in particular on how booking and train information would work practically and impact on passengers under the BTPF proposal. If Network Rail and operators would find it helpful, we could arrange for them to speak to the ORR Consumer Panel. We expect them to also engage with passengers directly on the possible impacts.

5. Funders may also wish to consider how their processes best fit with timetable production and passenger information commitments. Where we are best placed to advise, and industry or funders deem it helpful, I will ask my team to input.
6. Finally, industry appears in agreement that moving away from a December timetable change would be of benefit, and this is included in the current BTPF proposal. However, the specific drafting in the Regulations is restrictive compared with the desired flexibility of the BTPF programme. Therefore, we do not consider that this aspect of the current proposal is consistent with the timetabling provisions set out in the Regulations. We are engaging with Network Rail further on this issue. If DfT were to consider how this aspect of the legislation might be usefully revised, or if industry suggest a feasible alternative, we will also contribute to that discussion.
7. While this work is being undertaken, the existing contractual process continues to provide the enforceable rights and obligations for timetabling.
8. We will publish a copy of this letter on our website.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Stephanie Tobyn'.

**Stephanie Tobyn**