

Feras Alshaker
Director, Planning & Performance



Ellie Burrows
Regional Managing Director, Eastern Region

By email

1 May 2025

Dear Ellie

Re: Eastern Region: Performance Improvement Plan Update

Thank you for responding to my request to Jake Kelly, in a letter of 21 January 2025, to provide additional information in support of your performance improvement plan and for the positive and proactive way that your team has engaged with us throughout its development.

As you know, in October 2024 we asked the Eastern region to provide us with an improvement plan - learning lessons from our investigation into the Wales & Western region - because performance was continuing to decline and we considered it was highly unlikely that established passenger and freight targets would be achieved.

Overall, train performance in Eastern region has continued to decline since then.

Following receipt of the improvement plan we wrote again in January, asking the region to share further information for elements where we considered the plan gave insufficient confidence that good practice would be followed. We are content that the information now provided has adequately addressed our request for the region to describe how it intends to:

- govern its plan;
- prioritise its resources;
- share and import good practice;
- promote consistency of operational approach between its routes; and
- engage its customers on the plan.

Therefore, based on the information available to us we consider your plan to be credible. Our focus now moves onto monitoring its implementation. This includes the quantification of gains made from the plan's different schemes.

Most importantly, we will monitor how the plan's implementation improves train performance for passengers and freight.

We note that Network Rail needs to also focus on the successful implementation of the December 2025 East Coast Main Line timetable while delivering the wider plan. We recognise that the recovery plan will need to evolve in a controlled manner during the year, and that the forecast of performance outcomes may change.

Monitoring outcomes

Our approach to monitoring will remain proactive and proportionate. Wherever possible, we will use existing meetings (including the quarterly Regional Liaison Meeting) and selected visits (arranged in advance with Network Rail) to scrutinise initiatives from the plan. We will also be paying close attention to the continuing development of the region's engagement with its passenger and freight customers and will continue to seek their feedback from time to time.

To minimise the effort required to support our activities we encourage you to use existing management information wherever possible to keep us updated. In support of this, you should report punctuality improvement from the plan using the "Time-to-3" measure (in line with Network Rail's 2025-26 scorecard). Through forthcoming engagement we ask your team to describe the conversion from the existing "On Time" trajectory in the plan, as well as any change in the baseline trajectories and forecast.

We will also be looking for consistency between the assumptions made in your plan and the ambitious yet realistic forecast you will make in the imminent CP7 performance reset.

We will keep delivery of the plan and train performance trajectories for passengers and freight under active review. We will continue to discuss progress with you through our regular forums. Ultimately the success of the plan will be judged on Network Rail's contribution to passenger and freight train performance, which is currently below expectations.

Yours sincerely

Feras Alshaker

cc: Gunnar Lindahl (NR); Steve Helfet (ORR)