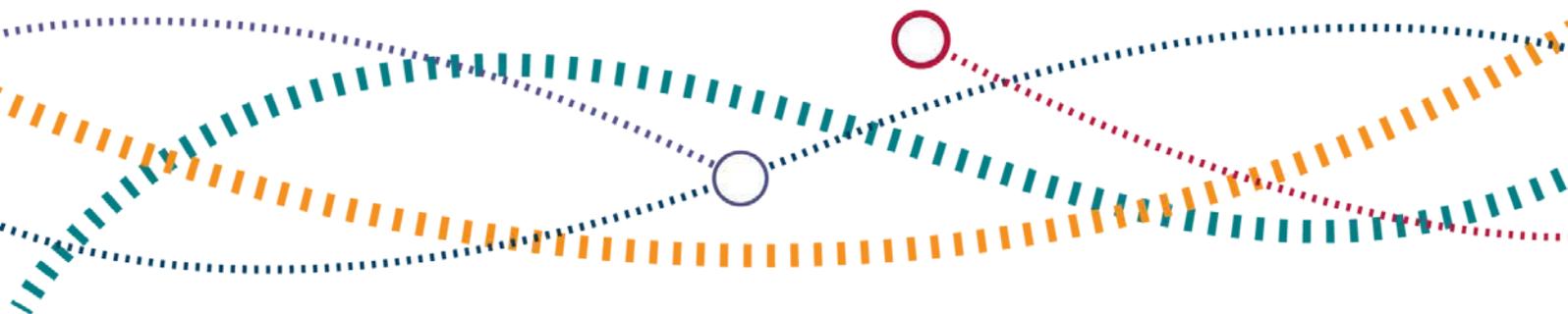




ORR review of Network Rail's delivery of train and freight performance in North West and Central region: Progress against ORR recommendations

Spring 2021 assessment

27 May 2021



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Introduction

In May 2020 ORR published its [conclusions](#) from its investigation into Network Rail's impact on poor train and freight performance in the North West and Central (NW&C) region. In summary, ORR found that Network Rail had identified the main causes of poor performance and had started to develop remedial action plans, but that these were not supported by time-bound milestones.

ORR consolidated its conclusions into a series of 25 recommendations that would strengthen these improvement plans which it would monitor over the following 12 months. NW&C region accepted all of these recommendations and acknowledged these were within the scope of its daily operations.

Since then ORR has closely monitored what action the region has been taking to address its findings. In December 2020, six months in, ORR published an [assessment](#) on progress of those recommendations.

This is ORR's latest assessment of North West & Central (NW&C) region's progress one year on from publication of the investigation recommendations. It covers the four areas of the investigation: train performance and operational management; timetabling, track access & enhancements; asset management; and Project Alpha, Putting Passengers First and engagement.

For each area, there is a summary of progress since the last six month assessment in December 2020 up to 7 May 2021, the cut-off date for this assessment. Underneath the summaries, each of the recommendations are listed in table format, with a RAG status as at 7 May 2021 (with the RAG status for December 2020 also recorded).

The RAG scores reflect the following:

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| | Green: NW&C has made, or is nearing, sufficient progress to date with the recommendation. |
| | Amber: NW&C has made some progress to date with the recommendation. |
| | Red: NW&C has not made the expected progress to date with the recommendation. |
| | Grey: Recommendation closed. |

Train performance and Operational Management

Since ORR's investigation the region has made good progress overall in improving its operational management. In twelve months it has adequately addressed seven of the nine performance and operations recommendations, with two to remain open for further close monitoring and the remaining to fall within ORR's normal oversight.

The region has worked to understand the dispatch at managed stations on North West and West Coast South routes. Dispatch at Manchester Piccadilly was found to have been poorly controlled by Network Rail at the time of the investigation. In contrast to Birmingham New Street, where Network Rail staff undertook dispatch, at Manchester Piccadilly operator dispatch procedures were not well understood by Network Rail and platform management needed to improve. The 'one team' approach at the station has been further developed, with a dedicated role introduced to manage operations and passengers at platforms 13 & 14. At Euston, good use has been made of Amey's 'Quartz' tool to explain and analyse station delay.

ORR has not seen sufficient progress to date with regards to the development of a strategy to exploit the use of technology e.g. Automatic Route Setting. The region has told us that the regional operating board is now in place, with consultants engaged to develop the regional operating strategy. This will be developed by September 2021 and will have a wider remit than technology. The region should continue this workstream and share its outputs with ORR.

On signalling regulation, positive steps have been taken towards revising and implementing regulation principles to help signallers decide how to manage the train service at key locations when trains become delayed. Some work undertaken by the region, such as a trial of Time to 3 regulation in the Coventry corridor, was not well planned. Regulation to 'old' metrics (such as PPM) has continued for too long into CP6, despite the metrics against which operators are measured having changed just over two years ago. Best practice in this exists in the form of RSSB project T1178 ('PERFORM: Understanding what makes a good train regulation decision with CP6 Metrics'). ORR has seen some good work aligned with this project, and positive engagement with operators on how different regulation decisions affect their performance metrics. Production of the final document and implementation will be closely monitored.

On performance management capability, ORR has noted ongoing positive engagement with the region's lead operators on Risk Management Maturity Model for Performance (RM3-P) assessments. Sharing of good practice between operators, routes and regions continues with use of the Industry Performance Knowledge Hub (formerly the PIMS Good Practice Library). The region is well resourced and has the necessary senior support to

continue its good progress with the Performance Improvement Management System (PIMS).

Progress in developing operational contingency plans linked to new fleet introductions in two of the three routes within the region has been much slower than expected. The recommendation was specific – that the region should engage early with operators to create joint contingency plans that would be available to Network Rail operations staff, helping them to deliver the service and so mitigate the ‘on the day’ performance risk associated with new fleets (whether that be technical failure of the train and recovery of the unit, cancellations due to driver shortages or other operational arrangements such as stabling and how this affects maintenance access). The recommendation was in response to concerns raised at the time of the investigation that the region did not have sufficient information on how TOC operations (traincrew) would impact performance prior to the May 19 timetable change on the Central and West Coast South routes. It was also in response to the well-known performance impact of new fleets introduced on the region since the May 18 timetable change. Three new fleets are due to be introduced during 2021; class 196 & 730 by West Midlands Trains, and class 777 by Merseyrail.

The region has delivered a large amount of work to the infrastructure, and supporting the network change processes, to enable these vehicles to enter service. However, ORR expect operators to be supported by the region to manage the risk to performance and delivery of the timetable. ORR agrees that many of the potential issues are outside of Network Rail’s control – such as delays in the supply chain, or industrial action by operator staff. However, in the same way that the region must respond to and mitigate the risk of external events such as weather and vandalism, it must use its relationships with operators to work together to reduce the potential for delay.

Plans for entry into service of the new fleets, or records of detailed discussions on this, have not been seen by ORR. On Central route, with less than six months until proposed entry into service, stabling arrangements for the cl. 730s have yet to be confirmed. A group to identify and solve operational issues associated with the cl. 777s on Merseyrail has been formed, although Network Rail performance and operational staff do not yet regularly attend. The two routes in the region must now urgently understand the operational impact of new fleets and work with operators to minimise performance risk, and avoid reputational damage to the industry at the point of entry into service.

ORR will continue to closely monitor train performance and operational management through regular engagement with the region’s performance and operational teams and will scrutinise evidence of delivery.

Train performance and Operational Management recommendations

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| ORR001a Network Rail should actively engage with train operators to help reduce station dwell times and enhance train dispatch. (North West route) | | | |
| ORR RAG score Dec 20 | | ORR RAG score May 21 | To close |
| Summary of assessment May 2021 | | | |
| <p>Network Rail's control of dispatch at Manchester Piccadilly has been improved. Activity has included appointment of a 'platform manager' for platforms 13 & 14 and production of a comprehensive 'train dispatch and dwell' report. Analysis of dwell times should continue to ensure control is retained as passengers return, and to inform the proposed major timetable changes in the Manchester area in May 22.</p> <p>Closed in respect of NW&C investigation and subject to normal monitoring.</p> | | | |

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| ORR001b Network Rail should actively engage with train operators to help reduce station dwell times and enhance train dispatch. (Central route) | | | |
| ORR RAG score Dec 20 | | ORR RAG score May 21 | To close |
| Summary of assessment May 2021 | | | |
| <p>ORR recognised Birmingham New Street arrangements as good practice at the time of the review and mid-year assessment of progress and have no further concerns with dispatch on Central route at this time. The route should share its good practice with others in the region.</p> <p>Closed in respect of NW&C investigation and subject to normal monitoring.</p> | | | |

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| ORR001c Network Rail should actively engage with train operators to help reduce station dwell times and enhance train dispatch. (West Coast South route) | | | |
| ORR RAG score Dec 20 | | ORR RAG score May 21 | To close |
| Summary of assessment May 2021 | | | |
| <p>West Coast South route has made good use of Amey analytical tools to improve its understanding of dwell times at Euston and delay at key locations. Dispatch at Euston and good operational control will be key during HS2 construction and to fully assess and allocate capacity on this busy route.</p> <p>Closed in respect of NW&C investigation and subject to normal monitoring.</p> | | | |

ORR002 Network Rail should review the failings of the Manchester Oxford Road ARS system with the relevant technical specialists and the System Operator (SO), to ensure its functionality is fully utilised.

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| ORR RAG score Dec 20 | Closed | ORR RAG score May 21 | Closed |
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Summary of assessment May 2021

This recommendation was closed following a meeting with Manchester Operations Manager (Paul Owen) in September 2020, where it was explained to ORR that ARS on the Manchester Oxford Road panel in Manchester ROC was not “switched off”, as had been described during the investigation, but had never been functional due to technical incompatibility between the signaling systems in use (relays vs. SSI on neighbouring control areas). This was not made known to ORR at the time of publishing the initial report.

ORR003 Network Rail should also review where such technology is practical to employ elsewhere on the network.
(Note¹: This recommendation relates to ARS technology, and other technology which assists signallers/controllers to run the train service, in other locations across the region.)

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| ORR RAG score Dec 20 | | ORR RAG score May 21 | |
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Summary of assessment May 2021

In September 2020, ORR was told by the region that this recommendation would be covered in the region’s operating strategy, to be delivered by the operating strategy board.

Vacancies in the team hampered its progress, and consultants have now been engaged to develop the strategy. A list of where technology is employed on the region has been supplied by NW&C, but this does not contain any analysis or evaluation of its use and impact on operations.

Recommendation to remain open.

ORR004 Signalling regulation policy should be reviewed for consistency across the region, and optimised for train service performance.

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| ORR RAG score Dec 20 | | ORR RAG score May 21 | To close |
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Summary of assessment May 2021

Progress towards developing a consistent, performance focused regulation policy aligned with CP6 metrics has been slower than expected. In particular, the move away from regulating for PPM has not yet taken place more than two years into CP6, when several operators moved focus to Time to 3. Work undertaken recently by the region has been good, with evidence provided of significant consultation with operators and recognition of the cultural and behavioral change needed to improve regulation of the train service.

¹ This clarification on signalling technology has been added to the original recommendation; it does not change the scope of the original recommendation.

ORR will monitor implementation and effectiveness of the revised regulation policy closely, including any modelling or trials undertaken.

Closed in respect of NW&C investigation and subject to normal monitoring.

ORR005a Where possible, Network Rail should accelerate plans to co-locate signallers and TOC/FOC controllers and endeavour to share relevant information to help improve service recovery. This will require industry collaboration. (North West route)

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| ORR RAG score Dec 20 | | ORR RAG score May 21 | To close |
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Summary of assessment May 2021

NW&C will pursue integrated control arrangements via Rail Efficiency Board and will monitor progress through the board, and implementation, within the region. ORR will continue to review service recovery practices including communication and collaborative command and control arrangements with operators.

Closed in respect of NW&C investigation and subject to normal monitoring.

ORR005b Where possible, Network Rail should accelerate plans to co-locate signallers and TOC/FOC controllers and endeavour to share relevant information to help improve service recovery. This will require industry collaboration. (Central route)

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| ORR RAG score Dec 20 | | ORR RAG score May 21 | To close |
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Summary of assessment May 2021

NW&C will pursue integrated control arrangements via Rail Efficiency Board and will monitor progress through the board, and implementation, within the region. ORR will continue to review service recovery practices including communication and collaborative command and control arrangements with operators.

Closed in respect of NW&C investigation and subject to normal monitoring.

ORR005c Where possible, Network Rail should accelerate plans to co-locate signallers and TOC/FOC controllers and endeavour to share relevant information to help improve service recovery. This will require industry collaboration. (West Coast South route)

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| ORR RAG score Dec 20 | | ORR RAG score May 21 | To close |
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Summary of assessment May 2021

NW&C will pursue integrated control arrangements via Rail Efficiency Board and will monitor progress through the board, and implementation, within the region.

ORR will continue to review service recovery practices including communication and collaborative command and control arrangements with operators.

Closed in respect of NW&C investigation and subject to normal monitoring.

ORR006 Network Rail should consider opportunities for sharing and learning best practice from within the region and other regions/routes, applying the learning where relevant.

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| ORR RAG score Dec 20 | | ORR RAG score May 21 | To close |
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Summary of assessment May 2021

The region has completed a review of their incident learning review (ILR) processes and demonstrated where improvements have been made. Development of a 'lessons learnt' system continues, and a periodic 'Heads of Performance' meeting has been established for route and operator performance teams to share good practice and learning (ORR invited as observers).

Closed in respect of NW&C investigation and subject to normal monitoring.

ORR007 Network Rail should continue to arrange self-assessments of both itself and operators in the region, across all categories of the RM3P framework, working on areas of weakness to reach high levels of compliance.

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| ORR RAG score Dec 20 | | ORR RAG score May 21 | To close |
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Summary of assessment May 2021

NW&C region continues to use the RM3P framework to assess itself and, jointly, its lead operators. Assessments and follow up has been shared with ORR.

Closed in respect of NW&C investigation and subject to normal monitoring.

ORR008a Network Rail should continue to work closely with TOCs/FOCs to understand their aspirations regarding new fleet introductions, engaging at an early stage to develop joint contingency plans with operators to respond rapidly to 'on the day' failure incidents.

(North West route)

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| ORR RAG score Dec 20 | | ORR RAG score May 21 | |
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Summary of assessment May 2021

North West route has not provided sufficient evidence to reassure us that it is managing the operational risks associated with introduction of class 777s on Merseyrail. Meeting notes and agendas provided indicate that discussions on the new fleet between Network Rail, Merseyrail and Merseytravel are focused on infrastructure works and unit acceptance, with no Network Rail operational or performance staff in

attendance. The North West route director has told us that a working group has been formed to review operational and performance risks but that relevant Network Rail staff had not yet attended. This group should be used to develop contingency plans to ensure any issues do not impact on performance.

Recommendation to remain open.

ORR008b (1&2) Network Rail should continue to work closely with TOCs/FOCs to understand their aspirations regarding new fleet introductions, engaging at an early stage to develop joint contingency plans with operators to respond rapidly to 'on the day' failure incidents.
(Central route)

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| ORR RAG score Dec 20 | | ORR RAG score May 21 | |
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Summary of assessment May 2021

Central route has demonstrated its understanding of the potential for operational and performance issues to be caused by new fleet introductions, evidenced by the letter sent to WMT from Dave Penney and a 'deep dive' session held on the introduction of cl. 196 & 730 onto the route. However, focus is still on infrastructure works (depots) and unit acceptance. Contingency plans should be developed to ensure any issues do not impact on performance.

Recommendation to remain open.

ORR008c Network Rail should continue to work closely with TOCs/FOCs to understand their aspirations regarding new fleet introductions, engaging at an early stage to develop joint contingency plans with operators to respond rapidly to 'on the day' failure incidents.
(West Coast South route)

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| ORR RAG score Dec 20 | | ORR RAG score May 21 | To close |
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Summary of assessment May 2021

This recommendation was agreed to be closed as West Coast South lead operators are not currently planning to introduce any new trains. It is expected that lessons learnt and good practice will be shared from other routes for any which may take place in future.

Closed in respect of NW&C investigation and subject to normal monitoring.

ORR009a Joint performance strategies should be data-driven, forecasting as accurately as possible known performance risks, including areas of operator responsibility such as traincrew resource levels and timetable development plans.
(North West route)

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| ORR RAG score Dec 20 | | ORR RAG score May 21 | To close |
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Summary of assessment May 2021

ORR reviewed the routes 20/21 performance strategies on publication in early Summer 2020. North West route demonstrated good practice by working collaboratively with North & East route (Eastern region), Northern & Transpennine Express operators to delivery good quality performance strategies. Improvements in the analysis and mitigation of joint/operator risks were identified for the Merseyrail joint performance strategy and were fed back to the region at the time. A similar assessment will be undertaken on 21/22 strategies and shared with the region.

Closed in respect of NW&C investigation and subject to normal monitoring.

ORR009b Joint performance strategies should be data-driven, forecasting as accurately as possible known performance risks, including areas of operator responsibility such as traincrew resource levels and timetable development plans.
(Central route)

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| ORR RAG score Dec 20 | | ORR RAG score May 21 | To close |
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Summary of assessment May 2021

ORR reviewed the routes 20/21 performance strategies on publication in early Summer 2020. Central route produced a good quality joint performance strategy with Chiltern. Improvements in the analysis and mitigation of joint/operator risks were identified for the West Midlands Trains joint performance strategy and were fed back to the region at the time. A similar assessment will be undertaken on 21/22 strategies and shared with the region.

Closed in respect of NW&C investigation and subject to normal monitoring.

ORR009c Joint performance strategies should be data-driven, forecasting as accurately as possible known performance risks, including areas of operator responsibility such as traincrew resource levels and timetable development plans.
(West Coast route)

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| ORR RAG score Dec 20 | | ORR RAG score May 21 | To close |
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Summary of assessment May 2021

ORR reviewed the routes 20/21 performance strategies on publication in early Summer 2020. Improvements in the analysis and mitigation of joint/operator risks were identified for the Avanti West Coast joint performance strategy and were fed back to the region at the time. A similar assessment will be undertaken on 21/22 strategies and shared with the region.

Closed in respect of NW&C investigation and subject to normal monitoring.

Timetabling, Track Access and Enhancements

The four recommendations which relate to timetabling and train access were principally addressed to Network Rail’s System Operator. The recommendations were drafted prior to the pandemic, which resulted in a much higher level of timetable change than usual. In the six month assessment in December 2020, ORR noted good progress in the System Operator’s timetable assurance function, and we have continued to see good evidence of the Programme Management Office supporting risk identification and mitigation.

In response to the pandemic, Network Rail changed its approach to timetabling, and is now considering how to deliver timetabling in the future. This may have implications for the Network Code and Sale of Access Rights (SOAR) process. We are continuing to monitor Network Rail’s delivery of timetabling.

In NW&C, ORR asked Network Rail to improve its compliance with the Access & Management Regulations 2016 timescales in relation to Congested Infrastructure Declarations, to ensure their associated access rights policies are correct and to improve the quality and timeliness of evidence and capacity analysis provided for access applications. ORR continues to monitor this work.

Although these four recommendations are closed, ORR will continue monitoring through our regular engagement with the System Operator and the regions. It will also draw on evidence from the SOAR process. Risk management to support effective delivery of timetable change will be particularly important for May 2022 which is expected to deliver a significant level of change.

Timetabling, Track Access and Enhancements recommendations

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| <p>ORR010 Further to Network Rail’s work to implement the recommendations of the Glaister Review, it should strengthen the Programme Management Office (PMO). The PMO has recently been working to extend its activities further out from the timetable change, and this is a useful way to support risk identification and management as early as possible within the timetable process. ORR supports these efforts and recommend a continuing strengthening of the PMO.</p> | | | |
| ORR RAG score Dec 20 | | ORR RAG score May 21 | To close |
| Summary of assessment May 2021 | | | |
| <p>This recommendation has been achieved. ORR has seen good evidence of the Programme Management Office (PMO) supporting risk identification and mitigation. ORR will continue to engage with the PMO on a periodic basis.</p> | | | |
| <p>Closed in respect of NW&C investigation and subject to normal monitoring.</p> | | | |

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| <p>ORR011 Further consideration should be given to how Network Rail and emerging industry bodies can support franchise development, specifically how DfT and operators can be informed of, and respond to, information about network capacity and performance. The recommendations of the Glaister Review in respect of industry coordination and assured decision making, are of particular relevance to this.</p> | | | |
| ORR RAG score Dec 20 | | ORR RAG score May 21 | To close |
| <p>Summary of assessment May 2021</p> <p>This recommendation was closed as it was drafted prior to the changes made to passenger train franchises associated with the pandemic. How Network Rail assesses and articulates capacity to support service specifiers and open access operators remains an important issue, and we are continuing to engage with the System Operator and the Network Rail regions to secure improvements.</p> <p>Closed in respect of NW&C investigation and subject to normal monitoring.</p> | | | |

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| <p>ORR012 The SO, Network Rail regions, train operators and the PMO work together to ensure that access applications are made in accordance with industry-agreed timescales.</p> | | | |
| ORR RAG score Dec 20 | | ORR RAG score May 21 | To close |
| <p>Summary of assessment May 2021</p> <p>Alignment between industry processes is an important tool in managing timetable related risks, and ORR is keen to ensure that sufficient time is allowed in the SOAR process for issues and risks to be fully considered. However ORR recognises that the pandemic created uncertainty for the rail industry and necessitated a much higher level of timetable change than usual. This resulted in non-compliance with normal industry timescales, which also impacted on the SOAR process. The rail industry has decided to review how timetabling should be delivered rather than returning to the pre-pandemic processes, and ORR anticipates this may have implications for the Network Code and potentially the SOAR process.</p> <p>ORR continues to monitor the SOAR process, and continues to encourage the System Operator, Network Rail regions and train operators to work together to make applications as early as practicable.</p> <p>Closed in respect of NW&C investigation and subject to normal monitoring.</p> | | | |

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| <p>ORR013 To support the development of timetables and the sale of access rights, Network Rail must be able to robustly assess capacity and performance in sufficient time to support decision making, and more firmly challenge DfT if the assessment shows the timetable will be impeded. This will require modelling of capacity and performance at an earlier stage of the timetable and SOAR processes. The System Operator is already tasked with delivering a number of capital programmes to support this in the CP6 Final Determination. The successful delivery of these programmes, supported by improved capability with the System Operator, must continue to be a priority for delivery alongside robust day-to-day capacity planning activities.</p> | | | |
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| ORR RAG score Dec 20 | | ORR RAG score May 21 | To close |
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| Summary of assessment May 2021 | | | |
| <p>Progress of the System Operator’s capital programmes are monitored through our business as usual holding to account activity. We are content with the System Operators’ progress and this recommendation is therefore closed, but subject to ongoing monitoring elsewhere within ORR.</p> | | | |
| <p>Closed in respect of NW&C investigation and subject to normal monitoring.</p> | | | |

Asset Management

The region has completed five of the nine asset management recommendations, with four to remain open for further monitoring, whilst the rest move to be monitored as part of normal regulatory oversight.

ORR noted in its six month assessment that whilst NW&C was making some good progress in a few areas, it had not developed many of the robust monitoring and reporting processes which NW&C had originally signed up to.

Since the six month assessment, whilst evidence has been provided to indicate that some plans have been developed, ORR has been disappointed in the slow progress in addressing some of the recommendations, with further work still required to produce plans and deliver against them.

The region has made good progress on the implementing and monitoring plan for the electrification & power (E&P) asset strategy and in the root cause analysis process for understanding the unexplained failures. The region’s commitment to ISO 55001 was evident from the targeted assurance review carried out by ORR. Additionally, ORR noted appropriate actions and a clear strategy to address resource imbalance issues within the maintenance delivery units.

For the remainder of the recommendations, there are deliverables in various stages of development. Where further work is required to address the recommendations, ORR will continue to work with NW&C to review progress. Where there has been better progress in addressing recommendations to result in closure, ORR will continue to monitor these.

Asset Management recommendations

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| ORR014 Develop a coherent plan that sets out realistic timelines and how it intends to monitor, evaluate and report progress and stated outcomes that contribute to Project Alpha. | | | |
| ORR RAG score Dec 20 | | ORR RAG score May 21 | To close |
| Summary of assessment May 2021 | | | |
| NW&C has produced a baseline programme for the prioritised projects in the Ten Point Plan (TPP). TPP has ten workstreams and each workstream has time-bound deliverables (1-3 projects in each workstream), with milestone dates ranging between Feb and Aug 2021. Benefit cases for projects are being developed and refined – to capture the benefits and outputs. | | | |

As part of the region's evidence to the progress made, it provided the management review pack produced for the TPP Programme Board.

ORR intends to monitor the delivery and outcomes of the TPP through the quarterly meeting with the Director of engineering and asset management's (DEAM) team.

Closed in respect of NW&C investigation but subject to normal monitoring.

ORR015 Address the resource imbalance assessment in all maintenance delivery units (MDUs) within the region; (as defined in DRAM 10 Point Plan)

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| ORR RAG score Dec 20 | | ORR RAG score May 21 | To close |
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Summary of assessment May 2021

In the last 12 months, NW&C has carried out a reorganisation, plus reviews to address the issue. The reorganisation has looked at the resource requirements and new roles created to support the functions. As part of the TPP, it is undertaking a sizing review and review of section manager workload for which a tool has been created.

It has produced a plan with a list of projects/tasks to:

- establish track access requirements;
- clearance of backlog;
- review delivery unit staff numbers for the workbank; and
- recruitment of roles.

The delivery timescale ranges between Dec 2021 and Jan 2023.

A pilot review was undertaken in one MDU (Sandwell and Dudley) and the proposal options were presented to the region's Executive Board. This process will be replicated for other disciplines and MDUs.

ORR considers the proposed approach is a step in the right direction to address the issue and that this recommendation can be closed. ORR will monitor the progress and effectiveness of the approach through quarterly meeting arrangements with the Director of Engineering & Asset Management's (DEAM) team.

Closed in respect of NW&C investigation and subject to normal monitoring.

ORR016 Develop a proposal to better understand the real causes of the large number of unexplained failures that it has, so that appropriate actions to address them can be put in place; (as defined in DRAM 10 Point Plan).

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| ORR RAG score Dec 20 | | ORR RAG score May 21 | To close |
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Summary of assessment May 2021

NW&C has developed a root cause analysis process to understand the causes of failures and a strategy for continuous improvement. The region provided evidence of the process and its outcome (in the form of recommendations) for four recent incidents. It also shared the continuous improvement strategy.

The evidences provided satisfies ORR's requirements.

Closed in respect of NW&C investigation and subject to normal monitoring.

ORR017 Improve staff capability and competences to aid appropriate and timely asset interventions; (as defined in DRAM 10 Point Plan).

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| ORR RAG score Dec 20 | | ORR RAG score May 21 | |
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Summary of assessment May 2021

The region has recently produced a Competence & Capability strategy for track, drainage and off track. This strategy is supported by an action plan with a list of projects/activities. There are time-bound actions for track, drainage, off track and operational property. However, there are no milestone dates for Electrification & Power (E&P), Signalling & Telecom discipline. ORR expected the region to have established competency profiles for the roles and undertake a gap assessment to produce a roadmap to fill the gaps.

ORR requires further clarification on the milestone dates, particularly for competency assessment activity.

Recommendation to remain open.

ORR018 Address the unfunded items within the weather resilience and climate change adaptation (WRCCA) plan; (as defined in DRAM 10 Point Plan).

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| ORR RAG score Dec 20 | | ORR RAG score May 21 | |
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Summary of assessment May 2021

The region undertook work bank building of unfunded WRCCA civils schemes (following the Stonehaven derailment in August 2020) to address high risk flood / water management sites. It also identified alternate funding sources through DfT flood mitigation programme and secured additional funding to accelerate drainage data capture.

NW&C informed ORR that it is updating the WRCCA Plans to address the delivery approach for outstanding items without a funding source. ORR was told that the revised WRCCA plans are in the final stage of drafting and that these will subsequently be shared with ORR. On 7 May 2021 the region provided a draft version of the drainage management plan. ORR requires additional time to review and understand how it addresses the unfunded items.

Recommendation to remain open.

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| ORR019 Include a review of NW&C's inter-asset performance plans such as the management of vegetation. This is considered to be an external factor which affects the electrification system and requires to be managed holistically to provide a reliable asset, vegetation being the most prevalent factor. | | | |
| ORR RAG score Dec 20 | | ORR RAG score May 21 | |
| Summary of assessment May 2021 | | | |
| <p>The region informed us that it is producing a vegetation management plan in conjunction with all engineering asset groups.</p> <p>ORR received a draft version of the vegetation management plan on 7 May 2021. ORR will review the draft plan document and engage with the region to confirm whether it satisfies the recommendation requirements.</p> <p>Recommendation to remain open.</p> | | | |

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| ORR020 Acknowledge the importance of having accurate asset data upon which analysis can then be undertaken. In ORR's determination it was set out that Network Rail is expected to maintain its focus on the new Minimum Asset Data Requirements (MADR) that have been defined to establish a process for the Exchange of Asset Information (EAI). | | | |
| ORR RAG score Dec 20 | | ORR RAG score May 21 | |
| Summary of assessment May 2021 | | | |
| <p>The region is currently developing an Information Strategy and Data Quality Improvement Plan, as well as defining the Scope of Asset Info System. These are due for delivery by end of June 2021.</p> <p>MADR – This has been delayed due to ongoing discussions between the Technical Authority and Route Services. Whilst there was no progress on this at the time of the assessment, this is a nationwide issue affecting all the regions.</p> <p>NW&C has informed ORR that it expects to provide the evidence of key deliverables by July 2021.</p> <p>Recommendation to remain open.</p> | | | |

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| ORR021 Provide an implementation and monitoring plan for the E&P Asset Strategy and the OHLE Asset Strategy | | | |
| ORR RAG score Dec 20 | | ORR RAG score May 21 | To close |
| Summary of assessment May 2021 | | | |
| <p>Both strategies have been developed and implemented by the region. KPIs have been developed for monitoring performance. ORR will monitor the performance/benefits through the E&P regional quarterly liaison meeting.</p> <p>Closed in respect of NW&C investigation and subject to normal monitoring.</p> | | | |

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| ORR022 Restate its commitment to demonstrating alignment with ISO 550001 by March 2021 in its Strategic Business Plan. | | | |
| ORR RAG score Dec 20 | | ORR RAG score May 21 | To close |
| Summary of assessment May 2021 | | | |
| ORR carried out a targeted assurance review on this subject which confirmed the region's commitment to the ISO 55001 objective. | | | |
| Closed in respect of NW&C investigation and subject to normal monitoring. | | | |

Project Alpha, Putting Passengers First and Engagement

The region has completed the three recommendations and they have been moved into normal monitoring.

The region has demonstrated an improvement in its capturing and tracking of performance initiatives through IPAT. It was able to evidence how it is working towards continual improvement by tracking delivery of forecasted benefits against individual initiatives. These benefits were able to be seen at a route level, which identified areas of good practice, as well as areas which required further attention.

Work was also undertaken on improving the region's capturing of performance improvement activities through the joint Performance Improvement Strategies and it was demonstrated that this work has contributed to improved relationships between the region and operators. However, it is noted that more can still be done (issues raised in the Operations and Performance section).

The region has done well on its capturing and sharing of lessons learned, through the development of a best practice / lessons learned system which went live in early 2021. However, it is encouraged to continue to update and share documents uploaded to the library, within the region as well as externally – to drive continual performance improvement.

The region also demonstrated a strong commitment to improving engagement and delivering positive changes with operators, and this is strongly evidenced. The region established a number of new boards to capture improved engagement with TOCs and FOCs to deliver joint industry action plans. While in their relative infancy, these boards and forums have received positive feedback from operators, who welcome the engagement. The region is also sharing its lessons learnt and knowledge gained from this engagement with other regions. This shows a strong commitment to delivering changes and improvements through the NW&C review and the success of delivering Project Alpha initiatives – and this should be acknowledged as an example of best practice by all regions.

Project Alpha, Putting Passengers First and Engagement recommendations

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| <p>ORR023 A programme and timelines for improvement initiatives to be provided and tracked – the IPAT system does not track all performance activities. There is the opportunity for NW&C to look at combining all initiatives into the one location, including those included in the Joint Performance Plans.</p> | | | |
| <p>ORR RAG score Dec 20</p> | | <p>ORR RAG score May 21</p> | <p>To close</p> |
| <p>Summary of assessment May 2021</p> | | | |
| <p>Network Rail delivered well on this recommendation, and is demonstrating continued improvement in 2021. The region stated that it will continue to use IPAT to track quantified performance improvement initiatives in addition to continually improving its processes to better track delivery of forecasted benefits. In addition, the region has captured other performance improvement activities through its Performance Improvement Strategies (PIS) and will work with operators to deliver these through the year. A link to the IPAT and PIS were provided to ORR as evidence to support this recommendation.</p> | | | |
| <p>Closed in respect of NW&C investigation and subject to normal monitoring.</p> | | | |

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| <p>ORR024 Develop plans to improve the capture of lessons learned and application of these – through learning and sharing information with other regions.</p> | | | |
| <p>ORR RAG score Dec 20</p> | | <p>ORR RAG score May 21</p> | <p>To close</p> |
| <p>Summary of assessment May 2021</p> | | | |
| <p>Network Rail delivered well on this recommendation. The region has shown a strong commitment to delivering changes and improvements and is involved in numerous cross-region conversations regarding its learnings of the NW&C review and the success of delivering Project Alpha initiatives.</p> <p>As part of its process to improve, the region produced plans to improve the capture and sharing of lessons learned. In addition, it developed a best practice / lessons learned system which went live in early 2021. Within this system, NW&C have a dedicated regional area the National PIMS Good Practice Library to store PIMS policies, processes, good practice and share communications within the region as well as nationally. This supports the national strategy and allows access from external (non-Network Rail) parties. All NW&C completed RM3P Assessments and Joint Performance Strategies were also uploaded to this area.</p> <p>The region also shares ‘best practice’ at the NW&C Regional Performance Board, which provides a forum to share experiences and lessons. In addition, the region attended the December 2020 PIMS online conference to share experience with other routes & operators.</p> | | | |

ORR was provided access to the Good Practice Library and has attended a number of NW&C region meetings, at which good evidence of sharing best practice has been given.

Closed in respect of NW&C investigation and subject to normal monitoring.

ORR025 Develop robust stakeholder engagement plans, including TOCs and FOCs to establish how better Network Rail can work with them to improve performance.

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| ORR RAG score Dec 20 | | ORR RAG score May 21 | To close |
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Summary of assessment May 2021

Network Rail delivered well on this recommendation and has shown a strong commitment to improving engagement and delivering changes within the region.

The region established a number of new boards to capture improved engagement with TOCs and FOCs to deliver joint industry action plans. Examples include the Regional Performance Boards (NW&C & North of England), the Heads of Performance Board (all NW&C Routes, lead TOCs, RDG), and the North West & Central Senior Freight Engagement Forum (NW&C and FOCs). The region also received positive feedback regarding its levels of engagement following the NW&C Performance seminar (more than 100 attendees with 85+% overall satisfaction).

The region is continually improving its engagement with an ongoing review of meeting structures and effectiveness. ORR has attended a number of the NW&C Boards and Forums as evidence to support this recommendation. We look forward to a continued presence at these meetings.

Closed in respect of NW&C investigation and subject to normal monitoring.



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