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**From:** Andy Wylie  
**Sent:** 08 March 2024 15:30  
**To:** Mark Garner; Reed, David; Lewicki, Emyl  
**Cc:** Clancy, Gareth; Group Investment Sale of Access; Regulatory Reform New TAC/SA Info; Andriana Shiakallis; Tim.wright  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] RE: Hull Trains 27th SA - Statutory Consultation

Mark,

Thank you for the Network Rail (NR) comments on the above.

Most, if not all, of the risks outlined in your response are covered in the workstream activities, in which we are fully engaged with NR. Progress in all of them has been good, for example we are liaising closely with your timetable team, in what can only be described as trying times for the December 2024 timetable. We have already done a D Gauge run on 22x stock, which has shown surprisingly few possible gauging issues and none on the Retford to Sheffield section itself.

We note the comments on the proposed TAA and are in discussions over these. We also note the platform concerns and can assure you that FirstGroup has considerable experience in dealing with these issues elsewhere, i.e. on GWR and items such as stopboard positioning, minimising crossing downtimes and the running of test trains to validate the train/passenger interface - for a variety of passenger requirements, is something we regard as normal practise.

The interplay with other services at Sheffield is something we are concerned about but until the December 2024 position settles down, we are unable to definitively time ECS trains in and out of Sheffield and this is something that both our timetabling teams are aware of. However, given our proposed operating hours, we are not too concerned about exceeding the 18 TPH limit over Welwyn viaduct.

We would like to comment about the longer term ECML timetables statement because the efforts so far to produce a "Guiding Mind" timetable have not fully taken into account the needs of private sector operators and the results were most unsatisfactory to everyone except the DfT's operators. There is a lot of work to be done on concepts such as this, without in the meantime restricting both existing and potential new operators from being able to run additional services on the ECML.

We are committed to continuing to work with yourselves in order to be able to start running services to/from Sheffield in 2025 and we would like to thank NR for their help so far.

Regards,

Andy Wylie