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Network Rail Representation for the 3rd Supplemental Agreement submitted under Section 22A of the Railways Act 1993 for the Track Access Contract between Network Rail Infrastructure Limited and First Trenitalia West Coast Rail Limited dated 01 December 2022.

Purpose

This letter provides final representation from Network Rail Infrastructure Limited (NR) for the 3rd Supplemental Agreement (SA) submitted under Section 22A of the Railways Act 1993 for the Track Access Application between NR and First Trenitalia West Coast Rail Limited (FTWCRL) dated 01 December 2022.

This representation builds upon the representations submitted by NR for this application on 28 June 2024 and two representations relating to WCML South dated 07 February 2025 and 25 April 2025.

The purpose of this final representation is to provide Office of Rail and Road (ORR) with NR's final position on this application (and the specific access rights within it) and will do so by providing facts, data, and evidence to support our position.

NR can confirm that based on the facts, data and evidence outlined in this representation, it is not supportive of this application.

Where there are a number of applications seeking capacity at the locations referred to in this letter, and as detailed in Annex A, the basis of our support of applications either in total, or in part (as can be determined by reading the relevant representations), may have a connection to our position on all other applications at that location. You may wish to wait for final representations on related applications and the information provided therein prior to making your decision.

Background of the Application and Network Rail Representation

In line with ORR's letter to the industry of 24 April 2024 on 'Competing and/or complex track access applications for December 2024, May 2025, and December 2025 timetable changes', FTWCRL submitted this application to ORR on 17 May 2024 as a S22A application in line with ORR's deadline.

As requested by ORR, NR submitted a High-Level Plan in June 2024, and a further detailed plan was published on NR's website in August 2024 and updated in January 2025. NR made its initial representations on this application on 28 June 2024, where an initial view of the application's Form P and SA was provided.

On 22 July 2024, FTWCRL responded to the NR initial representation. In its initial representation on 28 June 2024, NR highlighted a number of items in the "NR Review of Form P and associated documents" section of the letter.

In this section we will highlight key points from the initial representation as well as any further comments we may have on the Form P and associated documents, and where applicable the course of action taken or still outstanding. We will also address points raised by FTWCRL in their response to NR's representation where applicable.

Quantum at Motherwell

In their application, FTWCRL requested two additional rights on a weekday and Saturday between London Euston and Blackpool North (i.e., one in each direction). They are also looking for four existing access rights on a weekday and Saturday between London Euston and Blackpool North to be extended from Preston to Glasgow Central (two in each direction) instead of running from Preston to Blackpool North. In the Form P, it is stated that the proposed services will be stopping at Motherwell (except for one Saturday service departing London Euston).

FTWCRL did not supply an amendment to Table 4.1 Calling Patterns of Schedule 5 to the TAC in its 3rd SA. NR would like to highlight that currently; Service Group 8 in Table 4.1 has three footnotes limiting the number of calls at Motherwell station.

For the December 2025 Timetable, an Access Proposal was submitted for 7 services that run via Birmingham to call at Motherwell on weekdays. 1 of these relates to this application, whilst the other 6 are services that already have rights. NR can confirm that for weekdays the calls at Motherwell are in line with that footnote. For Saturday, 8 services via Birmingham were bid to call at Motherwell, with 3 of these being related to the extensions in this application. FTWCRL's Table 4.1 limits them to 7 trains for weekday, 5 trains for Saturday and 9 on a Sunday, due to capacity and performance concerns.

This application by FTWCRL has not requested an increase to the quantum on Saturdays i.e., FTWCRL has not requested to amend the quantum in Table 4.1 through this application and the application does not propose to make any changes to footnotes within Table 4.1. NR therefore assumed that FTWCRL intended to operate within the boundaries stipulated within Table 4.1.

If ORR were to direct this application granting the access rights as requested by FTWCRL, we would like ORR to note that there has been no request for this footnote to be changed. Any change to the quantum of calls at Motherwell could have an impact on capacity and performance which NR would need to consider.

Performance measurement data

In its initial representation NR noted that, in Section 4.3 of the Form P, FTWCRL provided TOC performance measurement data Time to 3 (T-3) for 2003-2012. However, the timetables on which this performance data is based are not comparable to the timetable running today due to the numerous incremental changes that took place since 2012, as well as the significant timetable restructure that took place in 2022.

It is therefore not appropriate to use historical data from this period to assess this application. In our initial representation for the 3rd SA, we explained that we would require time to assess performance and have presented further data that is more up to date.

NR has provided more up-to-date performance information to evidence why we do not support this application, and this is detailed further in the performance section of this letter.

Safety Risk

In response to Section 3.2 of Form P, where it was marked as “N/A”, implying no safety risks had been identified, NR stated, in its response of 28 June 2024, its intention to undertake due diligence and necessary assurance to assess any safety risks associated with the proposal.

In the WCML General Representation letters, we have highlighted certain safety concerns such as Passenger Flow at London Euston and detail this further in this letter. In addition to this, NR has now completed the appropriate risk assessments through the Timetable Change Risk Assessment Group (TCRAG) process and level crossing assessment, and no additional safety risks have been identified in relation to the access rights sought in this application.

Capacity

In Section 4.2 of the Form P, it stated “These services were incorporated in the timetables developed by the WCML Industry Planning Group (IPG) and Event Steering Group (ESG) workstreams. We know the capacity exists for these services as they were included in the December 2022 ESG”.

In its letter dated 28 June 2024, NR stated that NR’s Capacity Planning and Advanced Timetable Team had initially undertaken validation work on this proposal.

In their letter dated 22 July 2024, FTWCRL stated that they remain confident that the services within this application are deliverable with the network capacity available and will work collaboratively with industry partners to restore the last gaps in the hourly service between Birmingham and Scotland via the West Coast Main Line (WCML).

NR has now concluded that it does not support this application due to concerns raised and evidenced in its WCML representation letters dated 07 February 2025 and 25 April 2025, and concluded in this representation letter.

Power Supply

FTWCRL raised points about power supply in their 22 July 2024 response as per below:

Catterall & Harker feeding areas

FTWCRL in their response to the NR representation letter also stated that 'NR have asserted five locations where power supply constraints exist. FTWCRL notes that two of these (Catterall & Harker feeding areas) were not the subject of the "early warning of congested infrastructure" letters. The latest statement from NR "NW&C Traction Power Capacity and Capability Overview" published in May 2024 shows Catterall as having "no significant concerns". FTWCRL would like to understand what has changed in the interim regarding this feeder station'.

Harker was listed as a concern in December 2022, however when NR remodelled this area using up-to-date assumptions, it found that it no longer had any concerns. NR has made some changes with the Distribution Network Operator agreement at Catterall to raise the fault level (and therefore reduce the Negative Phase Sequence) and this concluded the concern raised. There are currently no concerns for Harker and Catterall with regards to this application.

Bushey Feeder Station Power Supply Upgrade

In the Form P, FTWCRL stated that "NR supported the application from May 2025". In their response to the representation, FTWCRL also stated that "except for the rights sought for two trains on the London Euston - Blackpool North route (via the Trent Valley) the trains in this application are already operating on the network via Bushey and do not therefore represent an additional quantum in the timetable or uplift in traction power supply demand at this location".

Bushey Feeder Station Power Supply Upgrade, as planned at that time, has not been completed, however phase one of the upgrade is due to be completed ahead of the December 2025 timetable. This upgrade provides greater resilience and a reduction on the failure rate but no additional capacity. The most recent power modelling, undertaken in early 2025, has not highlighted any concerns at Bushey because of this.

NR can therefore confirm that it no longer has concerns at these locations. Given the complexities of the power supply modelling undertaken by NR, the opportunity to discuss the details with ORR directly (focussing on the key constraints and times) would be welcomed. We are already in discussions with FTWCRL about power supply.

Draft Supplemental Agreement

In the draft SA provided with the application paragraph 1 (b) states the "Effective Date" means the later of the date on which the parties enter into the terms of this SA pursuant to directions from ORR under Section 22A of the Act and 02:00 on 18 May 2025.". In line with FTWCRL's updated application they submitted to ORR the date they are now seeking the application to apply from is the December 2025 timetable change date and NR would expect the SA to be updated to reflect this.

WCML South Fast Lines General Representation Letters dated 07 February and 25 April 2025

NR can confirm that this application is seeking access rights at the interacting location WCML: Euston to Nuneaton and therefore the General Representation letters to ORR regarding WCML South Fast Lines dated 07 February 2025 and 25 April 2025 are relevant to this application. We would like to highlight key points which are more pertinent to this application, namely:

07 February 2025 Letter - Timetable Capacity, Timetable Performance, Passenger Flow at Euston Station, High Speed Two; and

25 April 2025 Letter - Performance Concerns Affecting WCML Applications, Power Supply, Congested Infrastructure and Complex and Competing Applications.

Access Rights Sought in the Application

The original 3rd SA was requested to apply from May 2025, however FTWCRL submitted an updated application to ORR to request the rights to apply from December 2025. FTWCRL and NR submitted a supported 20th SA to ORR which included the weekday rights only from the 3rd SA, on a contingent basis for one timetable only. This is in line with the interim approach published in August 2024 on NR's website and was approved by ORR with no presumption of continuity. FTWCRL did not include its aspiration (as per this application) for the Blackpool North Saturday right in that 20th SA.

The Additional Rights sought in this application are for:

The rights included in the 3rd SA	Days	Additional Firm Right Required	Specific locations identified in ORR's Letter of 24 April 2024
Glasgow Central to London Euston (HF08)	M-F (Off-peak) Saturday only (SO)	Plus 2	WCML South and Birmingham
Blackpool North to London Euston (HF06)	M-F (Off Peak) SO	Plus 1	WCML South
London Euston - Glasgow Central (HF08)	M-F (Off Peak) SO	Plus 2	WCML South and Birmingham
London Euston - Blackpool North (HF06)	M-F (Off Peak) SO	Plus 1	WCML South
London Euston - Blackpool North (HF08)	M-F (Off Peak) SO	Minus 2	
Blackpool North – London Euston	M-F (Off Peak) SO	Minus 2	

Table 1: Details of rights sought in this application.

Congested Infrastructure

The section on 'Congested Infrastructure' in NR's General Representation letter dated 25 April 2025 is relevant to this application.

With effect from 11th May 2020, NR declared the infrastructure on the WCML South fast lines between Camden South Junction and Ledburn Junction as congested infrastructure.

This declaration was made under the Railways (Access, Management and Licensing of Railway Undertakings) Regulations 2016, regulation 26 (2) because, following consideration of access requests received, NR considered that this element of the infrastructure would be likely to become congested during the December 2020 timetable period. Consequently, NR initiated a WCML Industry Planning Group ('IPG') in May 2020 which was tasked with considering options for generating additional capacity and improved performance. The IPG reported in January 2021 that a restructure of the WCML timetable could provide additional capacity and improved performance. The IPG therefore then initiated a second phase of work to develop and evaluate options for a restructured timetable, which was ultimately delivered under the governance of the Event Steering Group ('ESG') in December 2022.

On 9 July 2024, NR issued "Early Indicator of Likely Congestion" notices in relation to the following sections of the Northwest & Central network:

- Acton Lane feeding area (Bushey)
- Washwood Heath / Willenhall feeding area
- Crewe / Weaver feeding area

These Early Warning Indicator notices related to the impact of capability constraints on known or likely applications for electric traction capacity. Having recently updated the power supply modelling as part of this workstream, NR still has concerns in the areas highlighted above.

As demonstrated in our representation of 07 February 2025, NR will not be able to accommodate all applications seeking capacity on the WCML Fast Lines for the December 2025 timetable and beyond. As the declaration of congested infrastructure made in May 2020 remains active, NR will not be reissuing a further declaration of congested infrastructure.

Assurance / Assessments / Updates

The following section will address specific areas of consideration and risk relevant to the application.

Capacity

As stated in our WCML representation letter of 25 April 2025, NR currently does not support any access rights for additional WCML South services, seeking to utilise additional capacity on the fast lines, with the potential exception of one Manchester Piccadilly to London Euston contained within FTWCRL's proposed 17th SA.

FTWCRL submitted access proposals for the May 2025 Timetable which included services aligned to the rights sought in the 3rd SA. The additional extended Glasgow Central services requested for Saturdays could not be accommodated in the timetable due to non-compliances with services relating to rights in the GB Railfreight Limited's (GBRf's) 41st and 34th SAs.

The decision to not support any additional WCML South rights where services utilise the fast lines, is on the basis that theoretical capacity is not usable because of the actual performance of the timetable. The theoretical capacity of the additional access rights would utilise firebreaks within the timetable structure and have a significant detriment to performance as demonstrated in the WCML general representation letters. NR has provided evidence on capacity and performance in our two letters of representation on the WCML, dated 07 February 2025 and 25 April 2025.

The capacity assessment provided with the representation dated 07 February 2025, was completed for the fast lines on the section of WCML between London Euston and Rugby; it cannot be assumed that paths identified on that section would be available beyond Rugby to accommodate the access rights from their origin or to their destination. The capacity assessment did not consider ancillary moves required for operators to run their services. Following this, end to end capacity assessment and attempted deconfliction was undertaken as part of the production for the December 2025 timetable. This assessment was part of Network Rail's December 2025 timetable production.

Complex and Competing Applications

Through the complex and competing applications workstream, FTWCRL's aspired Saturday Only (SO) London Euston-Glasgow Central paths present unresolved conflicts against multiple schedules when reviewed against the base timetable (May 2025). The timings of the services being extended to and from Glasgow Central cannot vary significantly as they are extensions of services to/from London Euston within an established timetable structure on a route with capacity constraints.

Additionally, there are unresolved conflicts across the weekday and Saturday aspirations between FTWCRL 3rd SA aspirations and multiple services aligned to the below applications.

Freightliner Limited (FLIM) 26th SA
 Freightliner Heavy Haul Limited (FLHH) 27th SA
 GB Railfreight Limited (GBRf) 34th SA
 GB Railfreight Limited (GBRf) 41st SA
 East Coast Trains Limited (Lumo North West) Section 17
 Virgin Management Limited (Virgin) Section 17
 Wrexham, Shropshire & Midlands Railway Company Limited (WSMR) Section 17 Application

NR has provided its final representations on FLIM 26th SA (11th April) and Lumo North West,

Virgin and WSMR (9th May) and is unsupportive of those applications. NR is also unsupportive of the related rights in the FLHH 27th SA further information will be provided in our final representation. The conflicts associated with GBRf 34th and 41st relate to Saturday services.

NR has not provided representations on these applications yet and ORR may wish to wait until receiving representation concerning these applications; however, the outcome of those applications does not affect NR's position on the rights within FTWCRL's 3rd SA as outlined in this letter. The small number of conflicts between these applications are not the reason for NR's decision not to support the rights within this FTWCRL 3rd SA as detailed elsewhere in this representation. There were also conflicts present with the FLHH 28th application but this application has since been withdrawn.

NR has not provided representations on these applications yet and ORR may wish to wait until receiving representation concerning these applications; however, the outcome of those applications does not affect NR's position on the rights within FTWCRL's 3rd SA as outlined in this letter. The small number of conflicts between these applications are not the reason for NR's decision not to support the rights within this FTWCRL 3rd SA. There were also conflicts present with the FLHH 28th application but this application has since been withdrawn.

Analysis has also been completed to highlight interactions at the 9 key locations identified by the ORR, referred to as 'Proximity Analysis'. This involved counting services that are within 6 minutes of other applications submitted to the ORR (in response to their request on 24th Apr 2024). The analysis ignores which platform or running line the trains would use. The benefit is to demonstrate the extent of interaction between applications and the inherent risk or potential impact to others if capacity for those services was altered or if they were delayed by only a few minutes during operation.

Given the amount of proximations relevant to this application, the combination of these presents a risk to performance of the rights sought by FTWCRL and other unsupported applications running through the same locations. In particular, over 300 proximations have been found across the West Coast South for this application across weekdays and weekends, which are quantified in Annex C. Therefore, if ORR were to direct this application in line with what FTWCRL are seeking in, it would likely impact on the ability to accommodate other rights on the WCML, which NR may be supporting in its final representation of other applications.

Performance

In this section, a general update will be given, followed by specific information of the following:

- FTWCRL performance
- North section of WCML performance
- Historic performance
- Current Network performance

NR has undertaken further analysis of the performance of the fast line timetable. This analysis has shown the importance of capacity being available to absorb sub threshold delays before locations where there are multiple services tightly flighted. The current timetable is not performing to a consistently high level, and recovery from incidents is taking longer due to the successive flighting of trains on the WCML Fast Lines.

In our General Representation letter dated 25 April 2025 we stated that “For the benefit of passengers and freight users, it is NR’s view that Operational performance across all operators on WCML South needs to both recover to, and be sustained at, a higher level than current performance before additional train services, which don’t have rights, are considered for inclusion into the timetable.”

Our performance information and concerns on the West Coast Main Line (WCML) South Fast Lines have been outlined in our two letters of representation, dated 07 February 2025 (‘Timetable Performance’ section and Appendix C) and 25 April 2025 (London Euston to Rugby section).

We have specifically set out the importance of having a timetable that is resilient, and factors that underpin a resilient timetable plan including firebreaks at key conflict points to prevent spread of delay from service group to service group, are of key importance. Any additional services introduced on the West Coast South Fast Lines would further increase the number of services planned on minimum headway, reducing the number of firebreaks in the timetable and the ability to withstand typical variations in train presentation without significant spread of delay between services and across service groups.

Current performance metrics demonstrate that performance is not currently meeting expectations and is expected to decline further once all services which currently hold access rights, are running (as explained in our representation dated 07 February 2025). NR believes any additional services on the Fast Lines on the WCML South would have a significant detrimental impact to performance where the current quantum of services, combined with the realities of operating a mixed traffic railway, already have significant performance challenges and contribute to delivering performance at a level below expected levels.

FTWCRL Performance

FTWCRL West Coast punctuality within the confines of West Coast South has been regressing since May 2017. This can be further demonstrated when the COVID ‘bounce-back’ is removed from the data as well as the subsequent timetable changes that saw a reduced service offered up to December 2022. Above threshold delay on the WCML is also increasing in the Up Direction.

The West Coast Mainline is a highly utilised section of track which is susceptible to congestion and reactionary delays - (i.e., when a delay event of more than 3 minutes is caused to the train behind, because the train in front is in the booked path of that train). Even with the current firebreaks available, there is a lack of resilience within the timetable to aid recovery. In practise,

during normal operations the firebreaks are eroded, and the perturbation of lateness perpetuates across Route boundaries.

The proposed weekday services to be extended in this application from Preston to Glasgow Central are 07:16 and 11:40 departures from London Euston. In the December 2024 timetable the 07:16 ran in the same path while the 11:40 had a different path south of Birmingham New Street (departing Euston at 11:16), however would run in the same path north of Birmingham New Street after a significant dwell of 19 minutes at Birmingham.

Performance data shows the performance of these services in December 2024 as having an On Time at Preston of 34% for the 07:16 and 55% for the 11:40 (T-3 59% and 69% respectively).

As per previous narrative, the December 2024 timetable does not include services which have directed rights from December 2025. There are additional services, which have rights, that will be coming into the December 2025 timetable e.g., FTWCRL services and First Rail Stirling services. This is likely to have a further negative impact on the December 2024 assessment because it will further reduce the resilience of the timetable to absorb delays.

This anticipated level of performance is below that which stakeholders expect, and the risk is heightened with services extended between Preston and Scotland due to little operational flexibility and limited or no ability to divert as we go onto a two-track railway, as well as additional services added to an already congested network. It is also the case that these services will risk increasing reactionary delay given that they route via the West Midlands, despite longer dwells in Birmingham New Street, compared to the current timetable.

Figure 1 below, a graph showing the performance in percentage for “On Time” for the FTWCRL Service groups depicting the steady decline in performance of the Birmingham – Scotland services.

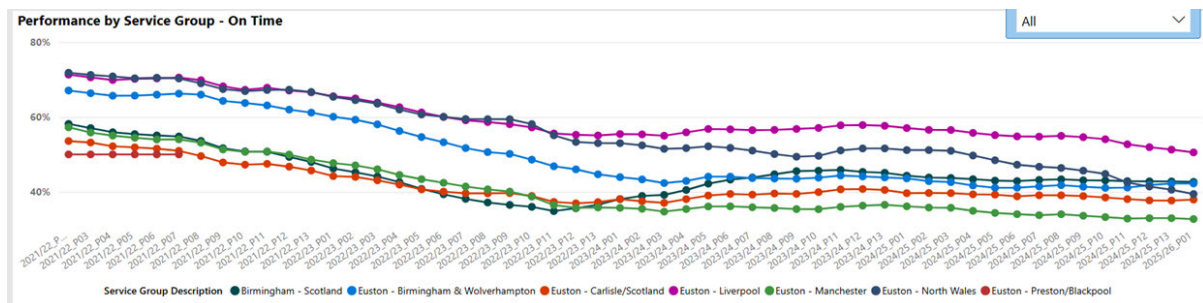


Figure 1: Graph showing the performance in percentage for “On Time” for the FTWCRL Service groups.

Figure 2 below, a graph showing performance in percentage for “T-3” for the FTWCRL service groups depicting that the Birmingham – Scotland service group has been on a constant decline.

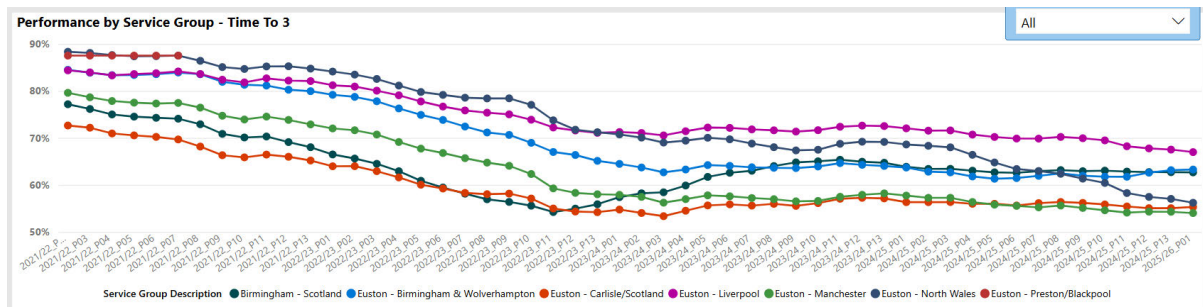


Figure 2: Graph showing performance in percentage for “Time to 3” for the FTWCRL service groups.

The graph above highlights the decline of FTWCRL performance over the last few years. Currently FTWCRL performance on the Northwest is significantly below the Time-3 route target for this year so any further traffic would be a concern and risk us not being able to deliver to our target. The Anglo-Scot route is also a poor performing route overall for FTWCRL and is potentially going to be subject to a task and finish group, it is our belief no further traffic should be included in this service group until this workstream has been completed.

North Section of WCML performance

The route north of Preston is predominantly two-track railway with considerable gradients and with significant speed differences between long distance passenger services and freight. Capacity on this section of track is very constrained with punctuality nearly 20% lower than the rest of NW&C (T-3 of 65.8% MAA P13 2024/25 versus the NW&C Region T-3 of 82.5% MAA P13 2024/25).

A two-track railway north of Preston operating a mix of traffic means flighting is imperative to performance. This involves consideration for traction speed capability, calling pattern, turnaround at destination, freight tonnage and freight length. The tables below consider performance on the North section of WCML between Crewe and Carlisle, and key stations in between:

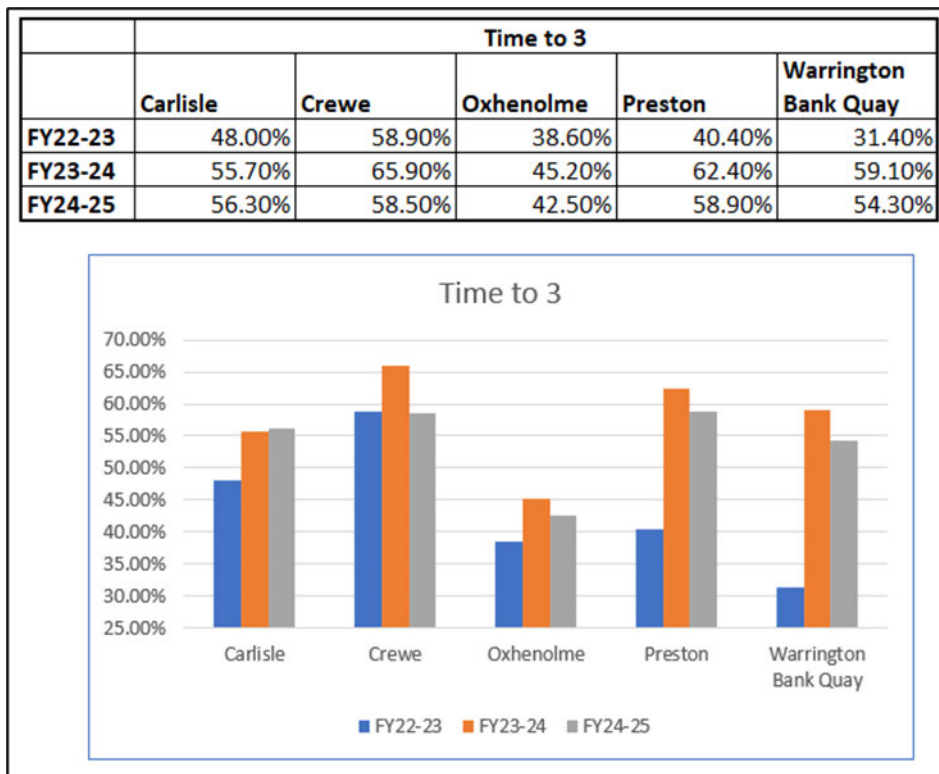


Figure 3: Graph showing performance of the Northwest section of the WCML between Crewe and Carlisle and key stations between

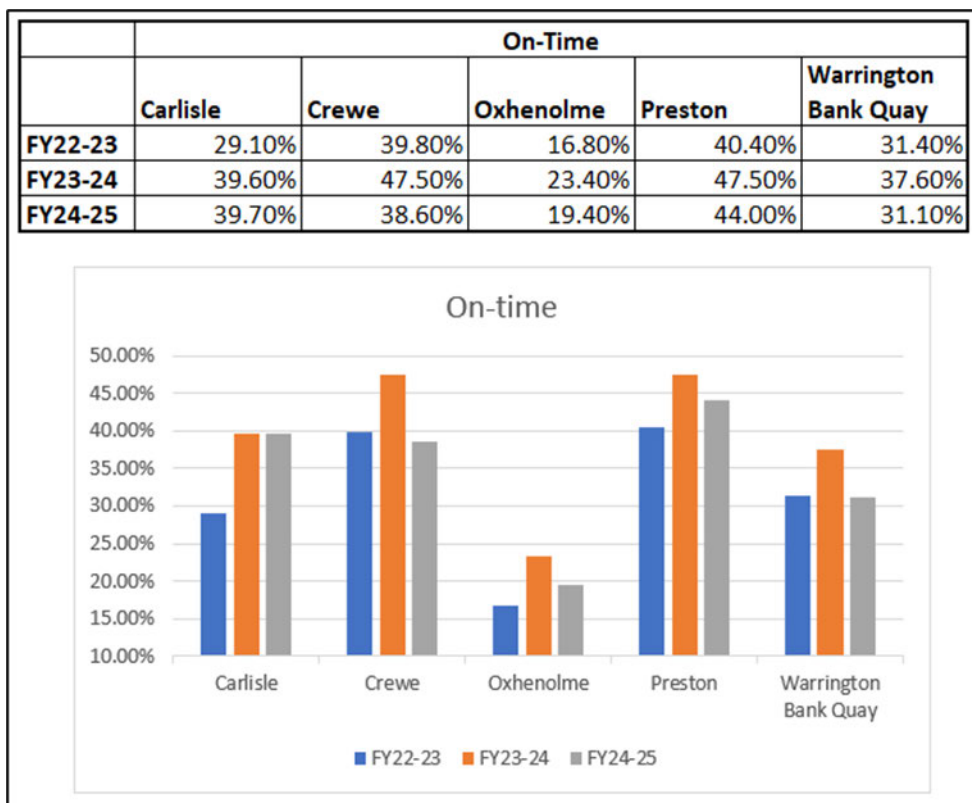


Figure 4: Graph showing performance of the Northwest section of the WCML between Crewe and Carlisle and key stations between

2024/25 has seen a reduction in train performance compared to 2023/24 as a general trend, although there are some instances where it has improved:

- Crewe On Time has dropped to the lowest level of 38.6%, with T-3 at 58.5%
- Oxenholme On time is at 19.4%, T-3 recorded at 42.5%
- Preston on time is at 44.0% and 58.9% for T-3

It is important to have a timetable that is resilient. A resilient timetable is one that, on a good day with no major unplanned disruption, can withstand typical variations in train presentation without significant spread of delay between services and across service groups. This is typically a function of either the content of the timetable plan itself or the content of the resource plan. Factors that underpin a resilient timetable plan include:

- Firebreaks in the timetable at key conflict points to prevent spread of delay service group to service group.
- Turnaround times that are robust to minor delays on inbound workings.
- Dwell times that reflect reality.
- Robust analysis before compliant but risky moves are introduced e.g., overtaking, splitting, and joining, repeated re-occupations on minimum headways etc.

The timing and performance of the existing services running immediately prior to the theoretical timetable capacity identified was based on data from the June 2024 timetable, which has the limitation of not containing all Fast Line services for which access rights are currently held by operators. For example, the June 2024 timetable doesn't contain the proposed new services by First Rail Stirling (previously developed by Grand Union Trains), which are not expected to commence operation until December 2025, nor the outstanding additional FTWCRL West Coast services between Euston and Liverpool, both of which have access rights, but are not yet running. The introduction of these additional services onto Fast Lines is likely to have an impact on wider WCML (South) performance and therefore the T-3 figures quoted above, have not taken into consideration the impact expected from these services.

Over the last few years, we have seen delay per incident rise, especially on the WCML, resulting in longer time to recover and delays spreading the full breadth of the country. We also see that incidents that occur for FTWCRL between Preston and the border with Scotland have the biggest Delay Per Incident (DPI) due to the nature of the infrastructure, and this will likely increase with more services. The number of incidences is highlighted below: -

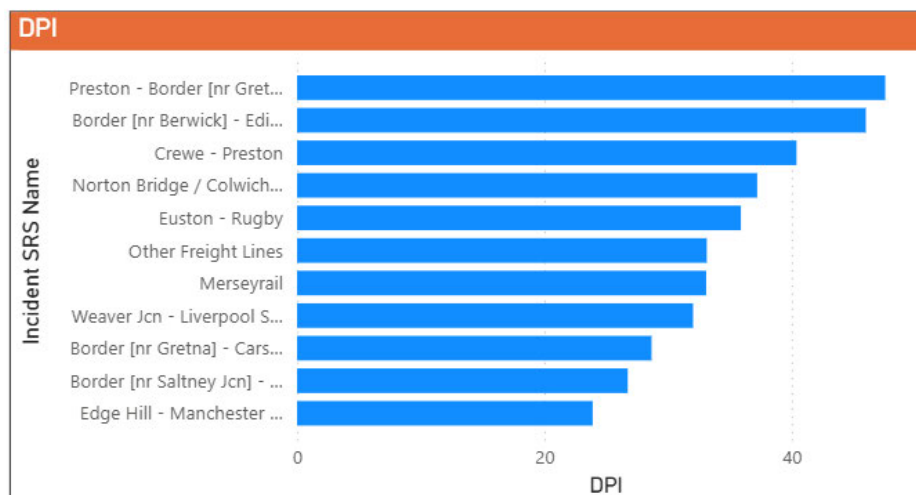


Figure 5: Graph showing Delay Per Incident

A mixed-use infrastructure from various operators and freight with very little operational flexibility, due to limited or no ability to divert as we go onto a two-track railway north of Preston, remains a concern. The network is currently operating with poor performance, as shown, north of Preston and there are challenges as we cross over the border into Scotland.

NR is already committed to further traffic on these lines with First Rail Stirling services due to commence in December 2025. Therefore, NR is not able to support additional FTWCRL services currently. Each timetable change since December 2022 has seen an increase in quantum of services running on the WCML and performance on the WCML remains fragile.

Historic performance

In the 07 February 2025 representation letter NR showed the negative impact of introducing additional services into the December 2019 timetable. NR previously shared with ORR the modelling undertaken as part of the December 2022 ESG and applications to support its implementation. In representation letters of 07 February 2025 and 25 April 2025 NR has expressed its concerns about the detrimental impact on performance of introducing additional services into the December 2024 timetable.

NR stated in the representation letter dated 07 February 2025 that there are potentially 9 available paths. Any services introduced in these potential paths would further increase the number of services planned on minimum headway, reducing the number of firebreaks in the timetable and the ability to withstand typical variations in train presentation without significant spread of delay between services and across service groups. This is because the identified 9 paths, in most cases, are replicating the hourly path of the First Rail Stirling services in the hours that they do not run.

Although the services that link to the rights within the 3rd SA were part of the concept train plan developed through December 2022 ESG and included in the performance assessment of the ESG, NR has made it clear that there is only a potential of 9 paths theoretically available, any services introduced utilising any of these would further increase the number of services planned on minimum headway. NR has also provided further performance information, based on the December 2024 timetable, in its representations, to clarify why it is not supportive of these additional rights.

Figure 5 below is a count of services running on minimum headway on the Fast Lines between Milton Keynes Central and Willesden Junction comparing the actual December 2019 timetable with the December 2022 structure contained in the Concept Train plan (upon which today's

timetable is based), and variations thereof. It demonstrates how the number of services running on minimum headway in the December 2022 structure timetable has increased since 2019. The introduction of the remaining FTWCRL Liverpool services and First Rail Stirling services will further increase the number of services planned on minimum headway, thus further reducing the resilience of the timetable. Any services introduced in the potential 9 available paths would further increase the number of services planned on minimum headway, reducing the number of firebreaks in the timetable and the ability to withstand typical variations in train presentation without significant spread of delay between services and across service groups. This is because the identified 9 paths, in most cases, are replicating the hourly path of the First Rail Stirling services in the hours that they do not run.

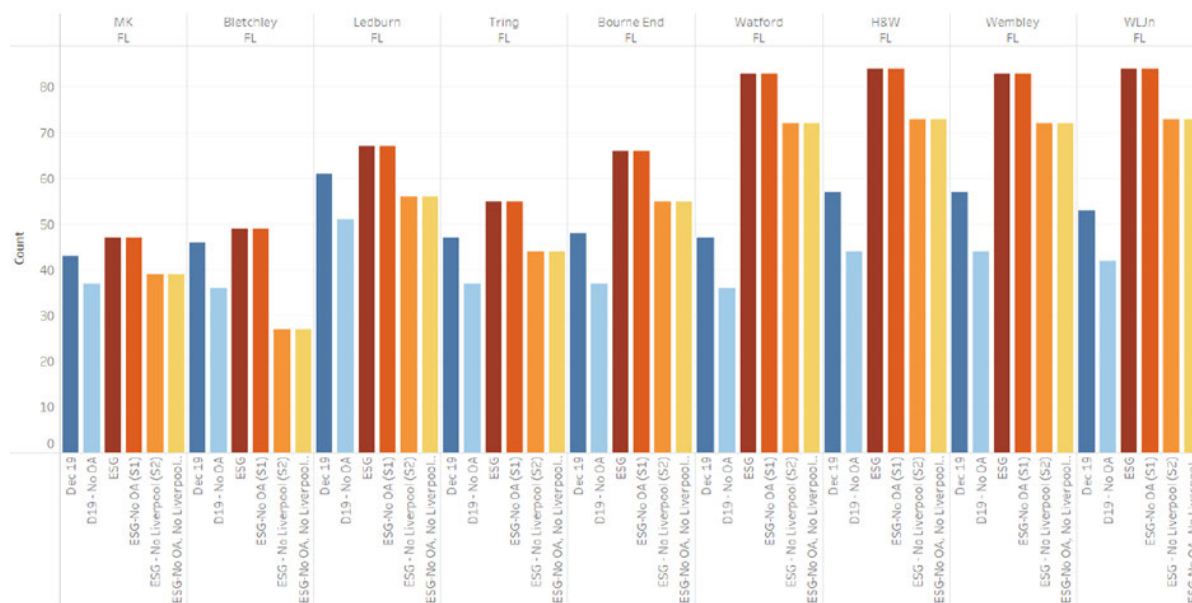


Figure 6: Count of services running on minimum headway on the Fast Line between Milton Keynes Central and Willesden Jn

Current Network Performance

The graph below shows the percentage of On Time arrivals at London Euston for mainline operators along with the Moving Annual Average (not including Arriva Rail London). Last quarter, P8-10 FY2024/25 saw an On Time arrival average of 50.2% for mainline operators.

Since COVID, we can see the performance trend for On Time arrivals to be declining. It is also the case that each timetable change since December 2022 has seen an increase of quantum of services running on the WCML as the industry has continued to recover from the effects of COVID, and in-line with operator recovery plans underwritten by funders.

There is much focus on WCML performance improvement through initiatives such as the 'First 60 Miles Plan' which aims to improve not only the number of failures experienced but also how incidents are managed and recovered – but performance on WCML remains fragile. It is also the case that service recovery is a joint industry activity and is a function both of NR and operator capability to deliver against agreed service recovery plans; challenges such as traincrew availability and fleet reliability can lead to variable outcomes depending on the nature of the disruption. In the absence of systemic change, reactionary impacts are only expected to worsen as service levels increase.

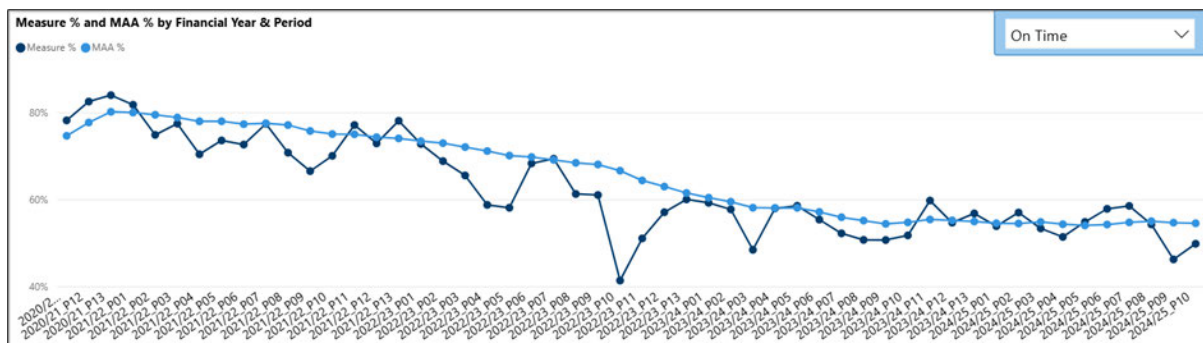


Figure 7: The graph above shows the measurement of performance by percentage and for FTWCRL as a whole. The light blue line is the moving average and the dark blue line is the period result.

Given all of the above, we would expect resilience to be significantly reduced in an already poor-performing area of the network if additional access rights and services are to be accommodated.

Passenger flow at Euston Station

In our general representation letter of 07 February 2025 NR highlighted the importance of passenger flow at Euston Station and emphasised that the pedestrian flow analysis provided shows that capacity at London Euston is forecast to be exceeded more regularly and for longer durations once services are running for all current access rights. Any further growth to passenger numbers because of further access rights granted and services run would further exacerbate the current challenges the station faces in passenger flow and the consequential passenger experience.

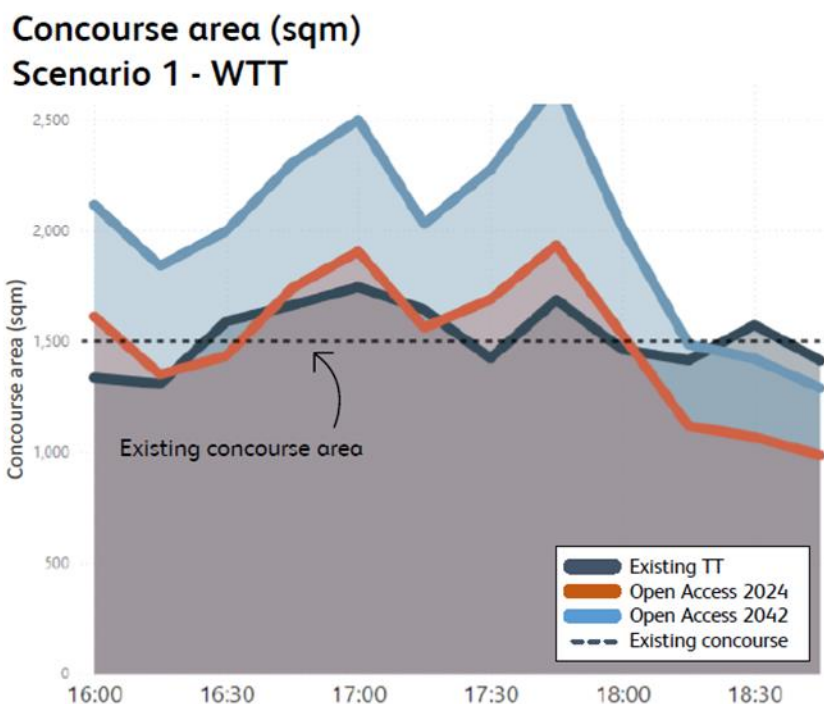


Figure 8: Concourse areas (sq. mtrs) for scenario 1 – existing working timetable and right sold

The graph above is based on a scenario of the current timetable and variations including the additional Liverpool and Stirling services with expected growth projections for 2042 and passengers starting to arrive 30 minutes before departure, with any passengers arriving within

15 minutes of departure assumed to travel straight to the platform. This shows that when the Liverpool and Stirling services are included demand is particularly concentrated, creating two 15-minute periods which are distinctly busier. Once passenger number growth has been allowed for, it shows that the concourse is expected to exceed capacity for most of the evening's peak.

The February representation includes several scenarios with delays to boarding and departure. For example, scenario four includes delays to boarding of up to 12 minutes and delays in departures up to 20 minutes which shows the current timetable, without the additional Liverpool and Stirling services, significantly exceeding concourse capacity for the majority of the evening peak.

As stated in the general representation letter in February, conclusions show that Euston Station is vulnerable to disruptions associated with delays and cancellations, as well as common cause variance in call to board announcements. The data suggests that even under the existing demand and timetable, the concourse design does not lend itself to accommodating spikes in demand well.

In the short run, the introduction of additional services at London Euston may contribute to poorer passenger experience on the concourse. Additional services may limit the station's ability to cope with common cause variance in train service, such as delays to boarding and departure. This means the station has less resilience to demand or operational fluctuation.

An improvement notice was issued in Q4 2023, which was closed out in December 2023. In December 2024, NR concluded phase one of its plan to continue driving improvement in the operation of the station and the customer experience. Whilst significant improvements have been made in accordance with our 5-point plan, challenges persist which will only be exacerbated through the introduction of additional services. For this reason, NR does not support any additional services within this application to/from London Euston.

HS2

Some of the access rights sought via these applications will interact with DfT and industry proposals, developed with West Coast Partnership Development ('WCPD') for HS2 operation. Specifically, any rights where the services will continue north on the WCML after Rugby heading towards Stafford.

A captive service between Old Oak Common and Curzon Street (Birmingham) is planned to commence in the early 2030s. The current expectation is that HS2 services will then shortly afterwards begin running on the existing WCML – to a combination of Manchester, Glasgow and Liverpool, joining the WCML at Handsacre Junction (near Lichfield). Some existing long-distance services will be withdrawn at this point, with replacement services added between London Euston and Birmingham New Street/Lichfield to better serve intermediate markets by making use of the capacity released.

A further section of the HS2 route (from Old Oak Common to Euston) will – subject to funding – be opened later in the 2030s, at which point the full HS2 Phase 1 infrastructure will be in place. That will trigger another change to the WCML timetable as more services can be withdrawn from the WCML south of Handsacre and re-directed to/from London via HS2. Train service specifications for these three stages are in development, decisions about which will be based on ongoing work between HS2 Ltd and WCPD. No part of the current HS2 programme scope delivers additional capacity north of Handsacre Junction, and it will therefore be necessary to reduce the current train service by approximately one path for every HS2 path introduced.

Power Supply Modelling related to WCML aspirations

In its power modelling, NR has attempted to maximise the capability of the network by assessing a realistic timetable which considers aspirations as well as a timetable running under normal operations today and in the expected future timetable (December 2025).

We have modelled a quantum of operations and traction reflective of the actual operational position. This means that the timetable modelled does not reflect the worst-case scenario should operators choose to exercise their full existing rights to operate at longer lengths or in electric (instead of diesel).

By coupling these modelling results with industry-agreed operational controls and mitigations (including restrictions to operating lengths and arrangements with operators to “notch back” through the areas of concern), three areas of concern remain:

- Washwood Heath (evening peak)
- Crewe and Weaver (peaks throughout the day)
- Willenhall

NR has undertaken a comprehensive power supply modelling exercise to assess the impact of accommodating all outstanding access proposals for additional electric services against the rights already held by operators (both passenger and freight), on the network’s traction power supply capability.

The outputs from this analysis have led NR to reach the following conclusion with regards applications for rights (and future returning rights) to the WCML South: - If applications appear in many of the power loading peaks, even if the issues explained were to be overcome, they should not be supported using electric traction until the upgrades have been completed.

Due to the nature of power capacity NR may need to impose operational restrictions on the use of electric or bi-mode trains (which follow existing procedures) and/or may need to object to the introduction of further electric/bi-mode trains where there is not the requisite power supply.

NR is conscious of its legal and regulatory obligations for power capacity to be allocated in a fair, open and transparent manner and in the least restrictive way possible, always mindful of our duty of non-discrimination and equal treatment. Funding and planned implementation dates are currently unknown for all interventions. Please refer to the NR General Representation on Complex and/or Competing Applications Interacting on Location West Coast Main Line, dated 25 April 2025, for further background on performance.

Conclusion

In this representation letter we have confirmed that NR does not support the access rights sought in this application as evidenced in this letter. Additional services on the Fast Lines of the WCML South and North section of the West Coast (as part of the additional Preston – Glasgow Central services) would have a significant detrimental impact to performance where the current quantum of services, combined with the realities of operating a mixed traffic railway, already have significant performance challenges and contribute to delivering performance at a level below expected levels.

NR considers that this final representation letter, plus the two WCML general representations dated 07 February 2025 and 25 April 2025 contain sufficient information on this application to enable ORR to make a decision. NR does not expect ORR to direct the rights being sought in this application on the basis of the information provided in this representation letter.

However, if ORR were to direct NR and FTWCRL to enter into contract, we would like the opportunity to review the terms of the contract.

Yours sincerely,

A black rectangular box redacting the signature of Omowunmi Toby.

Omowunmi Toby

Franchise and Access Manager

ANNEXES

Annex A – Interacting Locations Matrix

Annex B – Proximations

The tables below show the number of train services from other S17 and S22a applications which are at the same location within 6 minutes of a train path which has been assumed as a part of this application.

6-minutes is approx. double headway to draw out how proximity could affect the viability of another service. (Not all headways are 3 minutes. 6 minutes has been used to give a general indication).

This is limited to Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday only. ECML is not included.

This analysis is presented with the intention of highlighting the extent to which this application overlaps with other applications around Birmingham and on the South portion of the WCML.

WCML South				
	Count of Proximations			
Runs in Proximity with	Wed	Sat	Sun	Tot
Virgin S17	70	76	0	146
WMT 32nd	28	42	0	70
FTWCRL 17th	34	0	0	34
Lumo S17	17	17	0	34
WSMR S17	17	17	0	34
FLIM 24th	8	0	0	8
GBRf 34th	6	9	0	12
DRS 17th	3	0	0	3
CrossCountry 38th	1	1	0	2
GBRf 25th	2	0	0	2
LIS 2nd	2	0	0	2
DBC 83rd	1	0	0	1
FLIM 26th	1	0	0	1

Birmingham				
	Count of Proximations			
Runs in Proximity with	Wed	Sat	Sun	Tot
CrossCountry 38th	17	10	0	27
WMT 30th	12	12	0	24
Virgin S17	10	10	0	20
WMT 28th	10	0	0	10
WMT 22nd	2	2	0	4