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Alice Kaiser Office of Rail and Road 25 Cabot Square, London WC2B 4AN

26 June 2025

Dear Alice,

Network Rail Representations for the 28th Supplemental Agreement (SA) submitted under Section 22A of the Railways Act 1993 for the Track Access Contract (TAC) between Network Rail Infrastructure Limited (Network Rail) and Grand Central Railway Company Limited (Grand Central) dated 1 August 2014

#### 1 Purpose

- 1.1 This letter provides final representations from Network Rail for the 28th SA submitted under Section (S) 22A of the Railways Act 1993 for the Track Access Application between Network Rail and Grand Central submitted to ORR on 20 May 2024.
- 1.2 This representation builds upon the representations submitted by Network Rail for this application on the 28 June 2024 and the 14 March 2025 ECML General Representation on Complex and/or Competing Applications interacting on ECML Kings Cross Edinburgh and Leeds.
- 1.3 The latter of these letters provided important information to support ORR when it comes to making decisions on applications in this geography including context on the work in developing the ECML Policy, ECML Industry Task Force, key performance information, as well as updates on power supply assessment. The annexes to that letter include relevant information including Timetable Performance Analysis and ECML Power Supply Modelling and where there is specific relevance to this application, reference will be made in this representation.
- 1.4 The purpose of this final representation is to provide ORR with Network Rail's final position on this application (and the specific access rights within it) and will do so by providing facts, data, evidence to support our position. As the access rights sought in this application are at the ECML interacting location the evidence and data to evidence our position are all contained in the ECML General Representation letter dated 14 March 2025.

Network Rail can confirm that based on the facts, data and evidence outlined in this representation and the ECML General Representation, it is supportive of part of this application, subject to any comments, suggested amendments or specific issues highlighted in this representation. The access rights in the application we are partially supportive of are as follows:

- Network Rail is supportive of some but not all of the additional services between Wakefield Kirkgate and Bradford Interchange and are only supportive of that quantum and calling pattern on a contingent basis rather than a firm basis as requested for in this application;
- Network Rail is partially supportive of additional calls at Peterborough to be listed under the Additional Stations column within Table 4.1 of Schedule 5 (rather than in Regular Calling Pattern as requested for in this application). In addition to this, our support is on the basis that there is a footnote included stipulating that the additional Peterborough calls are dated to expire at December 2026, we request in its directions ORR expresses no presumption of continuity and the parties agree a review period to the December 2026 timetable change date of the performance of these incremental calls, using measures agreed between Grand Central and Network Rail; and
- Network Rail is partially supportive of additional calls at Seaham to be listed under Additional Stations column within Table 4.1 of Schedule 5 (rather than in the Regular Calling Pattern as requested for in this application). In addition to this, our support is on the basis that there are footnotes included stipulating that the call at Seaham excludes 10-car operation and the Seaham calls are dated to expire at December 2026 and we request in its directions ORR expresses no presumption of continuity.
- 1.5 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.
- 1.6

#### 2 Background of the Application and Network Rail Representations

- 2.1 In line with ORR's letter of 24 April 2024 to the industry on 'Competing and/or complex track access applications for December 2024, May 2025 and December 2025 timetable changes', Grand Central submitted this application to the ORR on 20 May 2024 as a S22A application in line with ORR's deadline.
- 2.2 As requested by ORR, Network Rail submitted a High-Level Plan in June 2024, and a further detailed plan was published on Network Rail's website in August 2024 (and updated in January 2025). Network Rail made its initial representations on this application on 28 June 2024 where an initial view of the application Form P and SA was provided. On 22 July 2024 Grand Central responded to the Network Rail initial representations. Further to this Network Rail issued a General Representation on the East Coast Mainline (ECML) to ORR dated 14 March 2025.
- 2.3 In its initial representation on 28 June 2024, Network Rail highlighted a number of items in the "Network Rail Review of Form P and associated documents" section of the letter. Where we have not had a response to the points highlighted we have noted this below for the Operator and/or ORR to address or take into consideration.
- 2.4 The points we would like to highlight from the initial representation and the course of action we require, are as follows:
- 2.4.1 Within the SA:
  - Network Rail stated that they "cannot currently support the additional rights as described in Table 2.1 and Table 4.1, because they would potentially interact with other known applications and so will need to be considered as part of the high-level plan. Grand Central at present does not call at Seaham and so Network Rail would need to understand the operational risk assessment for such

calls". Grand Central's representation letter of 22 July 2024 confirmed Grand Central "has previously undertaken dispatch risk assessments to use Seaham station during periods of disruption" and Grand Central is more than willing to update operational documentation, as well as Grand Central did "not anticipate this would create any concerns in relation to the granting of access Rights". Network Rail can now confirm it cannot support any firm calls (Regular Calling Pattern) at Seaham but can support contingent calls at Seaham in 5-car formation only, for the reasons described in the section below entitled "Access Rights Sought in the Application". Therefore, Network Rail does not support Seaham being added to the Regular Calling Pattern in Table 4.1 of Schedule 5 as proposed in the draft supplemental by Grand Central in this application, however we do support the addition of Seaham in the Additional Stations column of that table, with an appropriate foot-note that the call at Seaham exclude 10-car operation and with an end-date being December 2026 and we request in its directions ORR expresses no presumption of continuity. As a consequence Network Rail wish to work with Grand Central to enable the contingent call at Seaham by undertaking the necessary operational readiness.

- Table 2.1 passenger train slot rows: Network Rail notes that existing train service codes (TSC) are
  used for the proposed services but new TSCs may be required for what are new start and end
  points. Grand Central's representation letter of 22 July 2024 confirmed Grand Central "do not
  believe there is a requirement to consider new TSC's based on the service pattern proposed,
  however we would be keen to discuss with NR their view on this". Furthermore, Grand Central
  believe any new TSCs "can be further considered if the (ORR) approve access rights". Network
  Rail welcomes this response and if ORR directs to grant these access rights to Grand Central
  Network Rail looks forward to a future discussion when required.
- 2.4.2 Within the Form P:
  - Section 1.8: Network Rail stated the following: "We note the inclusion of draft timings but Network Rail requires more detailed timings in order to assess them as part of the high-level plan for the interacting rights applications. Network Rail Capacity Planning reached out to Grand Central on this and on 21 June 2024 Grand Central sent through more detailed timings (including F3 prints and a PIF file) for the proposed services. Network Rail notes that one service is proposed as a 10-car from York that splits at King's Cross and Network Rail will need to undertake the necessary platform work as part of its analysis. Network Rail would like confirmation of the depot arrangements and the feasibility of having an additional 10-car unit at the relevant depot." Grand Central's representation letter of 22 July 2024 confirmed that they have the necessary depot arrangements at Crofton depot and Tyne Yard, and "should the platforming work result in any issues relating to the operation of a 10-car unit, (Grand Central) does have an alternative proposal where instead of a 10-car unit operating from York, we would operate a 5-car unit from York and an additional 5-car service from Wakefield Kirkgate forming the first West Riding down service. This would require a small amendment to the proposed application, and we would be happy to discuss this with Network Rail as required following conclusion of any platforming work". Network Rail notes that the access rights sought do not align with the access proposal that Grand Central submitted for the December 2025 Timetable which did not include a 10-car unit for this service.
  - Section 3.1: Network Rail noted that "the proposed services are based on the ECML ESG timetable as a base and so is dependent on the implementation of the ECML ESG". Grand Central's representation letter of 22 July 2024 confirmed that they "believe there is an opportunity for a phased introduction, perhaps to include the Seaham calls, Wakefield Bradford services and 1 additional West Riding return service from May 2025, with the introduction of the full service from December 2025". Network Rail acknowledges Grand Central's response and notes Grand Central have now submitted an access proposal in line with this statement for May 2025 Timetable but it should be noted that the structure of the May 2025 timetable is distinctly different from the proposed ECML December 2025 Timetable.
  - Sections 4.2 and 4.3 (Capacity and Performance): Network Rail noted that "Grand Central have identified additional paths within the ESG timetable and that the proposed services in this application were not included in the ESG timetable performance modelling. Network Rail would require further detailed work to demonstrate these additional services have no detriment on the ESG timetable performance modelling". In relation to the performance modelling that did not include this applications proposed services, Grand Central stated in its 22 July 2024 representation letter

that they believe that "this will apply to a number of services, and whilst we do not believe that the small incremental changes proposed would have a detrimental impact on performance (indeed the ESG performance modelling showed that GC's performance would improve based on the revised timetable) we would be keen to understand how (Network Rail) is proposing to consider the performance impact across all proposed applications. It would seem inconceivable that (Network Rail) would expect each operator to provide details of performance analysis given the interactions (Network Rail) has already identified between applications." Network Rail can confirm that the rights sought on the ECML were not included in the ECML Timetable Performance Analysis and the below access proposals submitted at D-40 will not be accommodated in the December 2025 Timetable:

- 2 SX Bradford Interchange London Kings Cross
- 2 SO Bradford Interchange London Kings Cross
- 1 SU Bradford Interchange London Kings Cross
- 2 SX London Kings Cross Bradford Interchange
- 2 SO London Kings Cross Bradford Interchange
- 1 SU London Kings Cross Bradford Interchange
- $\circ$  1 SX London Kings Cross York
- $\circ \quad \ \ 1 \ SO \ \ London \ Kings \ Cross York$
- 1 SX York London Kings Cross
- 1 SO York London Kings Cross
- Note for the above list: SX = weekdays, SO = Saturdays, SU = Sundays.
- Sections 4.2 and 4.3 (Capacity and Performance): Network Rail notes that the proposal would mean one sub-half hour turnaround at Bradford Interchange during the day and would wish to understand the mitigations to remove performance risk." Grand Central responded in its 22 July 2024 letter by stating that "this would appear to relate to a Class 1 London to Bradford train forming a Class 2 Bradford to Wakefield train. Whilst the Timetable Planning Rules (TPR) specify a 30-minute turnaround on services from London, (Grand Central) will be seeking a reduction to this which will be included within our response to the 2025 TPR V4..." and "....we anticipate any performance risk to be minimal given there is no direct interaction between our Class 2 and any ECML services." Network Rail can confirm that Grand Central have sought a reduction as per a TPR proposal to the 2025 V4 LNE TPRs on 01 August 2024 and these changes at Bradford have been reflected in the final V2 TPRs for Dec 2025 which were published on 07 February 2025. Furthermore, Network Rail can confirm that the turnround time for services from London specified in the TPR has been reduced to 20 minutes from the December 2025 timetable. Two of the turnrounds proposed by Grand Central are shorter than the required 20 minutes, therefore, in addition to the other points raised in this letter, Network Rail is not supportive as these are now TPR non-compliant.
- 2.4.3 Network Rail also commented on how "Caledonian Sleeper sometimes divert into King's Cross during engineering blockades so Network Rail will consider this as part of its analysis to make sure it does not impact their ability to do so". In their representation letter of 22 July 2024, Grand Central also stated: "We note NR's reference to Caledonian Sleeper's requirement to allow services to be diverted into King's Cross during engineering blockades. Whilst some consideration should be given to this, we are unable to find reference to Caledonian Sleeper holding any firm rights for such a diversion. If NR disagrees with this statement, please could it clarify what entitlement Caledonian Sleeper has to a diversion into London King's Cross." Network Rail can confirm that Caledonian Sleeper "has permission to use any reasonable route for diversionary purposes, subject to obtaining any necessary route clearance for the Specified Equipment over the route in question as stated in Schedule 2 in its TAC (in line with the ORR Model Clause Contract).

- 2.4.4 Grand Central, in its 22 July 2024 representation letter, also commented on how Network Rail was "unable to include these aspirations in phase 1 and 2, stating that it may be able to assess this from Phase 3, but this will be dependent on any factors which may impact the plan" and that this "is an unacceptable position from NR". "GC believes it met this obligation through the provision of its Form P, draft Supplemental Agreement and draft timetable provided in PDF format." Grand Central also state on 22 July 2024 that it "is disappointing that NR has determined to focus on process for assessing applications, as opposed to the actual details of the application submitted, and we would welcome clarity from NR in relation to the process going forward and how it proposes to assess GC's application fully alongside all other applications received." Network Rail can now confirm, in relation to its high-level plan with phases 1 to 5, that the work completed for earlier phases has continued to develop through the later phases of the plan and the ECML Industry Task Force recommendation to proceed with the proposed ECML December 2025 Timetable. Grand Central's aspirations have been included in the later phases of Network Rail's Timetable Capacity assessments aligned to the complex/completing access rights workstream and inform Network Rail's final representation on this application. As set out in Network Rail's published Plan of Work, the phases in the high-level plan described were not set out as deadlines for completion of the analysis and assessment of access applications; rather they are primarily dates aligned to the Network Code and identified to demonstrate what analysis could pass between the Advanced Timetable Team and the Production team in Capacity Planning.
- 2.5 Further to correspondence on 28 June 2024 and 22 July 2024, Network Rail would like to highlight:
- 2.5.1 The ORR approval on 26 March 2025 of the 31<sup>st</sup> SA for Grand Central that granted a TAC extension to December 2038 on the proviso of investment in new bi-mode rolling stock from 2027 onwards. As a result Network Rail would like Grand Central to confirm the impact this will have on their operations including their expected depot arrangements. Network Rail also wishes to highlight that the Form P states in section 4.2 (Capacity) the "services proposed will be operated with Class 180 or Class 221 rolling stock. Both stock types are diesel traction and therefore no power supply constraint would exist for these services." However, it is now understood via Grand Central's 31<sup>st</sup> SA that its investment in bimode rolling stock will mean full replacement of Grand Central's diesel fleet which is anticipated to be complete by December 2028 and Grand Central will need to work with Network Rail on power supply mitigations as per the ECML Power Supply Modelling section in this letter. Network Rail notes that section 5.3 (Specified equipment) in the Form P also requires an update to reflect the change to rolling stock from December 2028.
- 2.5.2 The Form P states in section 4.3 (Performance) that the "ESG timetable performance modelling indicated that, in nearly all instances, GC's services are likely to be more punctual than in the current timetable." Network Rail wishes to confirm that this is referring to ESG performance modelling on Grand Central's existing services (i.e. not the additional rights sought in this 28<sup>th</sup> SA) which are part of the proposed December 2025 ECML Timetable. The ESG performance modelling on Grand Central's existing services was undertaken prior to the performance modelling referred to in the 14 March 2025 ECML General Representation which was presented to the East Coast Task Force on 27 January 2025. As stated in section 5.6 of the Form P the additional rights sought in this 28th SA "have been developed against the ECML ESG timetable as a base".
- 2.5.3 The Form P states in section 9.1 that this 28<sup>th</sup> SA relates to the 24<sup>th</sup> SA, which was also submitted to ORR on 20 May 2024. It can now be confirmed that ORR made directions on this 24<sup>th</sup> SA on 27 January 2025 which converted short-term contingent rights currently held by Grand Central for one daily Sunderland to London Kings Cross service, and for certain services to call at Peterborough (one service in each direction in each service group Monday Saturday), to firm rights until the end of Grand Central's current contract (December 2027). The directions also updated Description 1.1 and 1.2 within column 1 of Table 2.1 of Schedule 5 to reflect a Timing Load of Class 180. ORR's directions confirmed that "these are existing services which are already running in the timetable and confirmed as being included in the ECML timetable recast currently planned for December 2025". Network Rail notes that the 28<sup>th</sup> SA does not assume that the 24<sup>th</sup> SA has been directed and is a completely separate application to the 24<sup>th</sup> SA. As a consequence, the Schedule 5 rights tables drafted in the Supplemental Agreement relating to this application do not include those Schedule 5 rights directed in the 24<sup>th</sup> SA. Network Rail wish to see the new drafting of the Supplemental Agreement if ORR's direction of the application granted some / all of the rights in this application.

- 2.5.4 Within section 10.2 of the revised Form P included in Grand Central's 04 October 2024 submission to ORR, that Northern "confirmed they had no issues with the application providing that the changes are in line with the ESG timetable" and that "GC confirmed that it is confident that this is the case" by stating in its letter back to Northern dated 04 October 2024 that the "paths we are proposing use only existing slots in the ECML ESG timetable that were not in the January ESG freeze allocated to any other train operator". Where Network Rail is partially supportive of rights in this application we are satisfied that it is possible to accommodate those changes to the timetable.
- 2.5.5 Grand Central's notification to Network Rail and ORR on 04 October 2024 that the application has changed from the original application submitted to ORR by 20 May 2024 and we understand have been agreed to by ORR, as ORR has updated their website with the change. The detail of the changes stated in section 10.4 of the revised Form P:

A reduction of access rights sought as follows:

- "Monday to Saturday: GC is now only seeking 2 calls in each direction in the West Riding service group as opposed to 3 in each direction. This was a typo in the original supplemental agreement." Network Rail believes this is referring to calls at Peterborough. Network Rail notes that the proposed Supplemental Agreement submitted on 04 October 2024 still refers to 3 calls when it should now be 2 calls. However, Network Rail also notes that Grand Central, in its Access Proposal submitted at D-40 on 07 March 2025, included 3 calls at Peterborough each way within its West Riding EC02 Service Group: DOWN trains with headcodes 1D81 [SX and SO], 1D84 [SX]/1D94 [SO] and 1D97 [SX and SO] and UP trains 1A63 SX/1A71 [SO], 1A67 [SX and SO] and 1A68 [SX and SO] with 1D84/1D94 and 1A68 being additional trains applied for in this 28<sup>th</sup> SA.
- "Sunday: GC will not be seeking to introduce an additional York London service on Sundays following continued internal work on the proposed timetable." Network Rail notes that the proposed Supplemental Agreement submitted on 04 October 2024 still refers to an additional York – London service when it should now be removed.
- 2.5.6 Network Rail notes that no change has been made to the start date of the application which remains as May 2025, and this May 2025 start date is stated on ORR's website.

#### 3 East Coast Mainline (ECML) General Representation Letter dated 14 March 2025

- 3.1 Network Rail can confirm that this application is seeking the proposed access rights at the interacting location ECML: Kings Cross Edinburgh and Leeds and therefore the ECML General Representation to ORR is relevant to this application.
- 3.2 Whilst the entire letter is relevant to this application, we would like to highlight key points of that letter which are more pertinent to this application namely "Unused LNER Firm Directed Rights", "ECML Timetable Performance Analysis" and "Congested Infrastructure".

#### 3.3 Unused London North Eastern Railway (LNER) Firm Directed Rights

- 3.3.1 The ECML ESG Timetable does not include the Unused LNER Firm Directed Rights as stated in paragraph 5 in Network Rail's ECML General Representation letter to ORR.
- 3.3.2 The ECML Timetable planned for introduction in December 2025 does not include 8 LNER firm rights Monday to Saturday, 7 firm rights Sunday Only, between London King's Cross and Leeds via Wakefield or Micklefield directed by ORR in 2016.
- 3.3.3 The specification for the LNER service to/from London King's Cross had been reduced from 6.5 trains per hour (tph) to 6 tph with agreement from the Department for Transport (DfT) in 2021. This reduction retained the 0.5 tph London King's Cross Middlesbrough service, albeit as far as York, with the 0.5 tph London King's Cross Leeds service being descoped. ECML Programme Board on 21st March 2021 noted the recommendation from East Coast Route to defer the 0.5 tph London King's Cross Leeds service, including the conditional outcome of journey time reduction between London Kings Cross and Leeds, to a post-ECML ESG [December 2025] future timetable change.
- 3.3.4 As of 14 March 2025 Network Rail have formally declared congested infrastructure on relevant routes between Huntingdon North Junction (Jn) and New England North Jn (Peterborough) and Doncaster Marshgate Jn and Leeds Copley Hill West Jn.

- 3.3.5 Work undertaken by the ESG has shown definitively that this 0.5 tph London King's Cross Leeds service uplift cannot be accommodated alongside the other ESG outputs. As such the service cannot run in this timetable, or in future timetables, alongside the other industry endorsed aspirations without additional infrastructure and associated development activity, which is currently unfunded and uncommitted.
- 3.3.6 In line with our representations elsewhere that the 0.5 tph should not be directed any further in a TAC that relates to the ECML as there is no additional capacity expected to be available beyond December 2025 for its use, and so we do not believe an equivalent allocation is appropriate to be included in TACs.

#### 3.4 Congested Infrastructure

- 3.4.1 As stated in paragraph 6 of the ECML General Representation letter, Network Rail has declared Congested Infrastructure for the December 2025 New Working Timetable for three lines of route on the ECML.
- 3.4.2 Three lines of route that this application is proposing access rights for, are:
  - Between Huntingdon North Jn and New England North Jn (Peterborough);
  - Between Doncaster Marshgate Jn and Leeds Copley Hill West Jn; and
  - Between Northallerton Longlands Jn and Newcastle King Edward Bridge South via ECML.

#### 4 Proposed ECML December 2025 Timetable

- 4.1 As referred to in the ECML General representation letter, in February 2024 the ESG closed following an ECML Programme Board endorsement on 17 January 2024 to deploy the new ECML Timetable in December 2024, subject to the outputs of the completed performance modelling.
- 4.2 At the point in time of ORR's letter to the Industry on 24 April 2024, the DfT had accepted a recommendation from the Industry Timetable Assurance Project Management Office (PMO) to funders that the ECML ESG Timetable should be deferred from the December 2024 timetable change.
- 4.3 An ECML Industry Task Force (herein referred to as "the Task Force") commenced in June 2024 as an independently led executive-level cross-industry meeting that provides strategic direction for the work programme. The Task Force develops solutions to the problems of the new ECML Timetable, drives consensus on the outcome(s), and delivers recommendations for industry funders and specifiers.
- 4.4 On 17 October 2024 the Independent Chair of the Task Force wrote to the DfT to advise that the Task Force met on 10 October 2024, reviewed the considerations, issues, and risks, and recommended proceeding with implementation of the new timetable for ECML in December 2025. This was on the basis that the timetable is deliverable and meets the Task Force objectives that were set. Concerns were noted from GB Railfreight (representing themselves and other Freight Operating Companies), ScotRail and Transport Scotland. The Task Force recommendation was accepted by the DfT and subsequently endorsed by the Secretary of State in December 2024.
- 4.5 The Task Force had worked collaboratively up to 31 January 2025 to further de-risk the transition of the ECML ESG timetable from development to timetable production.
- 4.6 Advanced work completed by Network Rail Capacity Planning, to inform the December 2025 timetable risk, involved aligning cross boundary paths in the ECML ESG developed timetable with the latest developments in the wider National Working Timetable (WTT) and associated Rolling Spot Bids (RSB). This process has highlighted that, despite previous timetable development work, the national freight and passenger timetable has evolved and this work has been necessary to reduce the risk that capacity decisions may need to be made during the timetable production period between D-40 to D-26.
- 4.7 Therefore, where in this letter and in the ECML General Representation letter we have referred to the proposed ECML December 2025 Timetable, we are referring to the timetable work above namely, either full or in part, the:
  - Timetable which was developed by the ECML ESG and later deferred in April 2024;
  - Timetable where solutions were developed to the problems of the ECML Timetable as part of the Task Force;

- Advanced Timetable Work (undertaken between April and October 2024) to de-risk the transition of the ECML ESG timetable from development to timetable production; and
- Advanced work to inform timetable risk including aligning cross boundary paths in the ECML ESG developed timetable with the latest developments in the wider National Working Timetable and associated Rolling Spot Bids.
- 4.8 So where Network Rail highlight in this representation and the ECML General Representation letter (in the relevant annexes to that letter) whether the access rights sought on ECML in each application are as Network Rail expects in the proposed ECML December 2025 Timetable, we are referring to whether the access rights align to the above timetable work.

### 5 Access Rights Sought in the Application

The rights included in the 28 <sup>th</sup> SA	Additional Firm Right(s) Requested	Specific locations identified in ORR's Letter	Interaction
Two return services (one on Sundays) between Bradford and London.	Plus 2 each way SX and SO Plus 1 each way SU	(f) ECML Kings Cross-Edinburgh and Leeds	ECML between Doncaster and King's Cross ECML between Leeds and Doncaster
One late evening service London to Wakefield Kirkgate.	Plus 1 in one direction only, SX and SO	(f) ECML Kings Cross-Edinburgh and Leeds	ECML between Doncaster and King's Cross ECML between Leeds and Doncaster
As part of the North East EC01 service group, one daily service in each direction between York and London.	Plus 1 each way everyday	(f) ECML Kings Cross-Edinburgh and Leeds	ECML between York and King's Cross
Two additional paths per day in each direction between Wakefield and Bradford.	Plus 2 each way everyday	(f) ECML Kings Cross-Edinburgh and Leeds	ECML between Leeds and Doncaster
Up to four North East services a day in each direction to call additionally at Seaham.	Plus 4 each way everyday	(f) ECML Kings Cross-Edinburgh and Leeds	ECML between Northallerton and King's Cross
An increase in Regular calls at Peterborough for existing firm rights in the EC01 Service Group on SU.	Plus 1 call each way SU	(f) ECML Kings Cross-Edinburgh and Leeds	ECML between Northallerton and King's Cross
An increase in Regular calls at Peterborough for existing firm rights in the EC02 Service Group on SX, SO and SUN.	Plus 1 call each way on SX + SO Plus 2 calls each way SU	(f) ECML Kings Cross-Edinburgh and Leeds	ECML between Northallerton and King's Cross

5.1 The rights sought in this application are for:

- 5.2 Annex B of this letter contains a table which shows all of the access rights requested in this application when set against the February 2025 version of the proposed December 2025 ECML Timetable.
- 5.3 The Table in Annex B provides details of the access rights characteristics i.e.
  - Origin
  - Destination
  - Quantum by Day of Week (Peak or Off Peak)
  - If the access rights are currently held in the contract and proposed change is an amendment to those rights for e.g. calling pattern change, contingent to firm etc.

- Which locations it interacts with from ORR's list of nine locations in their letter to the industry 24 April 2024.
- 5.4 The table also identifies if the access rights origin and destination, quantum and calling patterns sought in the application, are as expected for the proposed ECML December 2025 Timetable.
- 5.5 In line with Network Rail's ECML letter to ORR on 14 March 2025, Network Rail can confirm that the rights sought to/from London are not supported as they are not in line with the proposed ECML December 2025 Timetable. However, Network Rail is supportive of part of this application. Network Rail is supportive of additional services between Wakefield Kirkgate and Bradford Interchange within Table 2.2 of Schedule 5 as well as additional calls at Peterborough and Seaham listed under Additional Stations within Table 4.1 of Schedule 5 with a footnote that the call at Seaham excludes 10-car operation and the Peterborough and Seaham calls are dated to expire at December 2026 with no presumption of continuity. In addition to this, our support of the additional Peterborough calls is on the basis that the parties agree a review period to the December 2026 timetable change date of the performance of these incremental calls, using measures agreed between Grand Central and Network Rail. Taking each of the rights Grand Central have applied for in turn:
- 5.5.1 The two return services (one on Sundays) between Bradford and London are not in line with the proposed ECML December 2025 Timetable and they run through a line of route that has been declared as Congested Infrastructure.
- 5.5.2 The one late evening service London to Wakefield Kirkgate is not in line with the proposed ECML December 2025 Timetable, would run through a line of route that has been declared as Congested Infrastructure and Network Rail notes that the access right sought does not align with the access rights that Grand Central has bid to use in the December 2025 Timetable.
- 5.5.3 The one daily service in each direction between York and London as part of the North East EC01 service group is not in line with the proposed ECML December 2025 Timetable and would run through a line of route that has been declared as Congested Infrastructure. Network Rail note, based on Grand Central's 04 October 2024 submission to ORR, that Grand Central "will not be seeking to introduce an additional York London service on Sundays following continued internal work on the proposed timetable". Network Rail notes that the proposed Supplemental Agreement submitted on 04 October 2024 still refers to an additional York London service on a Sunday when it should now be removed.
- 5.5.4 With regards to the two services in each direction between Wakefield Kirkgate and Bradford Interchange via Horbury (off the ECML) everyday:
  - It is Network Rail's understanding that one of these proposed rights between Wakefield Kirkgate and Bradford Interchange in each direction is a converted ECS move, in total 2 ECS moves. Network Rail also understand these services are linked to Grand Central's additional London services on the ECML as part of this application.
  - It is Network Rail's understanding that the conversion of these ECS moves to passenger services is on a route off the ECML (Wakefield Kirkgate to Bradford Interchange via Horbury) and so no interaction with the ECML.
  - On the principal that capacity can be demonstrated for these services (through the course of the December 2025 Timetable Production process), and that they are not linked to any of the London services which Network Rail cannot support, Network Rail are supportive of the following quantum and calling pattern on a contingent basis:
    - o 2 SX Wakefield Kirkgate Bradford Interchange
    - 2 SO Wakefield Kirkgate Bradford Interchange
    - 1 SU Wakefield Kirkgate Bradford Interchange
    - 1 SX Bradford Interchange Wakefield Kirkgate
    - 1 SO Bradford Interchange Wakefield Kirkgate
    - 1 SU Bradford Interchange Wakefield Kirkgate
  - As stated above Network Rail is not supportive of the following quantum of access rights sought between Bradford Interchange and Wakefield Kirkgate, on the basis they are linked to the unsupported London access rights sought in this application which Network Rail is not supportive of:

- 1 SU Wakefield Kirkgate Bradford Interchange
- 1 SX Bradford Interchange Wakefield Kirkgate
- 1 SO Bradford Interchange Wakefield Kirkgate
- 1 SU Bradford Interchange Wakefield Kirkgate
- Network Rail notes that Grand Central's 31st SA will mean full replacement of Grand Central's diesel fleet that with bi-mode rolling stock which is anticipated to be complete by December 2028. As a result Grand Central's depot strategy is expected to change and so from 2028 these services may no longer be ECS conversions to/from Crofton depot and/or their new depot strategy may mean that additional ECS moves are needed on the ECML, potentially between Doncaster Marshgate Jn and Leeds Copley Hill West Jn (declared as Congested Infrastructure), to enable these services. As a consequence Network Rail supports these ECS conversions with contingent rights as it is mindful of the future changes. Contingent Rights always hold the risk under the Part D process of not being accommodated in a future timetable, Network Rail and Grand Central jointly recognise that there is a future reputational risk of removing service(s).
- 5.5.5 Up to four North East services a day in each direction to call additionally at Seaham:
  - Additional calls at Seaham: Network Rail cannot support any calls at Seaham within Grand Central's Regular Calling Pattern (as requested in the 28<sup>th</sup> SA) but can support contingent calls at Seaham (and so listed under Additional Stations) on a dated basis (ending before the December 2026 Timetable) in 5-car formation only with no expectation of continuity. The requested additional calls at Seaham, which is a station off the ECML and would be an additional station call within an existing Grand Central service, can be accommodated in the December 2025 Timetable but Network Rail notes the short platform length at Seaham

As a consequence, Network Rail can only support the calls at Seaham as contingent calls (i.e. under the Additional Stations column in Table 4.1 of Schedule 5) with a footnote that the call is until the December 2026 Timetable and excludes 10-car operation, and we request in its directions ORR expresses no presumption of continuity. Network Rail will not be able to accommodate a 10-car Grand Central service at Seaham

Network Rail notes that Grand Central have previously confirmed to Network Rail that running in 10-car formation is no longer an aspiration for calls at Seaham. Network Rail can confirm that the following Seaham calls have been offered in the December 2025 Timetable:

- 4 SX each way, 4 SO each way, 4 SU on the UP and 5 SU on the DOWN.
- Contingent Rights always hold the risk under the Part D process of not being accommodated in a future timetable, Network Rail and Grand Central jointly recognise that there is a future reputational risk of removing calls at Seaham.
- Grand Central have indicated in conversations with Network Rail that they are willing to work with industry parties to see how the Sunderland plan may need to be flexed in future timetables to enable Seaham calls to be workable with future known aspirations without deteriorating performance (and so prevent some/all Seaham calls being removed at a later date).
- 5.5.6 Additional Peterborough call in each direction in both of their two service groups:
  - Network Rail cannot support any additional calls requested at Peterborough within Grand Central's Regular Calling Pattern (as requested in the 28th SA) but can support additional contingent calls at Peterborough (and so listed under Additional Stations) and our support is on the basis that there is a footnote included stipulating that the additional Peterborough calls are dated to expire at December 2026 and we request in its directions ORR expresses no presumption of continuity. Grand Central included additional Peterborough calls in their Access Proposal for the December 2025 timetable. The production process for the December 2025 timetable demonstrated that capacity is available for additional Peterborough calls. These calls are incorporated into paths of Grand Central services included in the proposed ECML December 2025 and consequently does not increase quantum through Peterborough, however these calls were not included in the ECML Timetable Performance Analysis. Our support is on the basis

that the parties agree a review period to the December 2026 timetable change date of the performance of these incremental calls, using measures agreed between Grand Central and Network Rail.

- Contingent Rights always hold the risk under the Part D process of not being accommodated in a future timetable, Network Rail and Grand Central jointly recognise that there is a future reputational risk of removing calls at Peterborough.
- Not all Grand Central's requests could be accommodated. The calls which could be accommodated and which are in addition to those which Grand Central already have rights for are as follows:
  - Sunderland EC01 service group:
    - SX additional 1 call on the UP
    - SO additional 1 call on the UP
    - SUN additional 1 call in each direction
  - Bradford EC02 service Group:
    - SX additional 1 call on the DOWN
    - SO additional 1 call on the DOWN
    - SUN additional 1 call in each direction
- Network Rail can confirm that Grand Central's existing Peterborough calls will continue in the proposed ECML December 2025 Timetable.
- Network Rail also notes, as stated in section 10.4 of the Form P submitted on 04 October 2024, that Monday to Saturday "Grand Central is now only seeking 2 calls in each direction in the West Riding service group as opposed to 3 in each direction. This was a typo in the original supplemental agreement." Network Rail believes this is referring to calls at Peterborough. Network Rail notes that the proposed Supplemental Agreement submitted on 04 October 2024 still refers to 3 calls when it should now be 2 calls as stated in the amended application.
- 5.6 The access rights sought do not align with the access proposals submitted by Grand Central for the December 2025 Timetable. Those not included in the December 2025 timetable Priority Date Notification Statement (PDNS):
  - One late evening service London to Wakefield Kirkgate Monday to Saturday;
  - One service in each direction between York and London on Sundays; and
  - Conversion of one ECS path in each direction between Wakefield Kirkgate and Bradford Interchange on Sundays to a passenger service.

Network Rail is unable to support the rights required to deliver the capacity not bid by Grand Central for the December 2025 Timetable. Grand Central recognise that they have not submitted an access proposal at D-40 for December 2025 for all of the rights sought in this application. For the rights sought between London and Wakefield Kirkgate, Grand Central have confirmed to Network Rail in a recent conversation that this was not bid for December 2025 as the 10-car option is no longer viable.

5.7 Network Rail would like to acknowledge that Grand Central notified Network Rail and ORR on 04 October 2024 that the application has changed from the original application submitted to ORR by 20 May 2024 and we understand have been agreed to by ORR, as ORR has updated their website with the change. The detail of the changes stated in section 10.4:

A reduction of access rights sought as follows:

- "Monday to Saturday: GC is now only seeking 2 calls in each direction in the West Riding service group as opposed to 3 in each direction. This was a typo in the original supplemental agreement." Network Rail believes this is referring to calls at Peterborough within its services between London King's Cross and Bradford Interchange. Network Rail notes that the proposed Supplemental Agreement submitted on 04 October 2024 still refers to 3 calls when it should now be 2 calls.
- "Sunday: GC will not be seeking to introduce an additional York London service on Sundays following continued internal work on the proposed timetable." Network Rail notes that the proposed Supplemental Agreement submitted on 04 October 2024 still refers to an additional York – London service when it should now be removed.

Network Rail notes that the reduction in access rights provided on 04 October 2024 does not mention that Grand Central is now not seeking rights sought between London and Wakefield Kirkgate.

5.8 Network Rail would like to acknowledge that Grand Central notified Network Rail and ORR on 26 February 2025 that the application start date has not changed from May 2025 as stated in the original application submitted to ORR by 20 May 2024.

#### 6 Assurance / Assessments / Updates

6.1 The following section will address specific areas of consideration, opportunity and risk relevant to the application or where applicable to specific access rights in the application. Where the outputs relate to specific access rights instead of the application as a whole this will be highlighted in the relevant section.

#### 6.2 Capacity

- 6.2.1 In line with Network Rail's ECML letter to ORR on 14 March 2025, Network Rail can confirm that the rights sought for passenger train slots on the ECML are not in line with the proposed ECML December 2025 Timetable.
- 6.2.2 The rights sought for passenger train slots on the ECML were not included in the ECML ESG specification and run through a line of route that has been declared as Congested Infrastructure.
- 6.2.3 Awarding the rights sought for passenger train slots would impact Network Rail's ability to accommodate the rights which are aligned to the proposed ECML December 2025 Timetable and would be additional services to the performance assessment.
- 6.2.4 The additional rights applied for in this application for passenger train slots are not running in the current timetable and, if any of the rights are approved, would be new services from December 2025.
- 6.2.5 All of the rights sought on the ECML for passenger train slots, to/from London Kings Cross, would be additional to the proposed ECML December 2025 timetable and consequently there is a concern over exceeding the route-stipulated quantum over Welwyn Viaduct and the subsequent performance risk of doing so.
- 6.2.6 The ECML December 2025 specification developed by the ECML ESG and subsequent ECML Industry Task Force took a holistic view of capacity and performance whilst considering service specifications, service aspirations and journey time outputs from ECML ESG and Task Force members. ORR in awarding the capacity to one of the operators identified as interacting within Annex A, in line with the proposed ECML December 2025 specification, would be allocating a proportion of the capacity that could otherwise be available to other Operators' applications, such as this 28<sup>th</sup> SA, or elements of applications, which were not included in the ESG specification and that have additional capacity requests at that location, which in the case of this application refers to the ECML Kings Cross-Edinburgh and Leeds.
- 6.2.7 In the case of any application that is related to the proposed ECML December 2025 Timetable, which was developed, modelled and recommended for progression into the development period the most applicable alternative option, if the rights sought were not directed, in full or part, would be to allocate capacity to an Operator who has aspirations for an access right with similar characteristics, i.e. Long Distance High Speed services. Consequentially, the ORR may wish to consider the impact on the forecast operation and performance of the Timetable and the basis on which the Taskforce recommended the timetable for implementation and the modelling undertaken to assure it.

#### 6.3 Performance

6.3.1 Network Rail can confirm that the rights sought on the ECML were not included in the ECML Timetable Performance Analysis that is listed within Network Rail's ECML General Representation to ORR on the ECML dated 14 March 2025. Please refer to Annex L of that letter for further information.

- 6.3.2 The Analysis in Annex L of the ECML General Representation, evidences that: factoring in the increasing level of TSAR above 16 tph over the Welwyn Viaduct and the modelled punctuality of the proposed ECML December 2025 Timetable, any quantum of services above that included in the proposed ECML December 2025 Timetable quantum 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. The addition of the access rights sought on the ECML in this application, as listed in section 5.5.1 to 5.5.3 above, would increase quantum above that previously modelled, and recommended, timetable and evidences why Network Rail is not supportive of the access rights sought on the ECML.
- 6.3.3 Furthermore, in Annex L Network Rail recommends "that where possible, dwell times at stations and performance allowances are used in key locations to protect performance, based on the modelling outputs and also the actual data that is now available post-December 2024 Go-Live to start informing any potential performance improvement activity. We are therefore unable to support its inclusion.

### 6.4 ECML Power Supply Modelling

- 6.4.1 Network Rail can confirm that this application directly relates to paragraph 11 of Network Rail's ECML General Representation letter to ORR dated 14 March 2025 and is included in the power modelling report in Annex M of that letter.
- 6.4.2 Network Rail wish to collaborate with Grand Central on any necessary power mitigations and, where applicable, set these out in the TAC until such point future power upgrades alleviate the risk. For the avoidance of doubt this includes any request to run in 10-car formation.

#### 6.5 Any other risks or cross-route concerns

6.5.1 The application goes across both East Coast route on the ECML and onto North & East route between Northallerton and Sunderland as well as between Doncaster and Bradford Interchange. There was a concern raised in a timetable change risk forum of the impact on signaller workload at Halifax for the rights sought in this application specifically for services in and out of Bradford Interchange and this will be mitigated via the timetable readiness work for December 2025.

### 7 Conclusion

- 7.1 In this representation letter we have confirmed that we are supportive of part of this application namely:
  - Network Rail is partially supportive of some but not all (we are not supportive where they are linked with the London services not supported in this application) of the additional services between Wakefield Kirkgate and Bradford Interchange and are only supportive of that quantum and calling pattern on a contingent basis rather than a firm basis as requested for in this application; and
  - Network Rail is partially supportive of additional calls at Peterborough to be listed under the Additional Stations column within Table 4.1 of Schedule 5 (rather than in Regular Calling Pattern as requested for in this application). In addition to this, our support is on the basis that there is a footnote included stipulating that the additional Peterborough calls are dated to expire at December 2026, we request in its directions ORR expresses no presumption of continuity and the parties agree a review period to the December 2026 timetable change date of the performance of these incremental calls, using measures agreed between Grand Central and Network Rail; and
  - A call at Seaham listed under Additional Stations within Table 4.1 of Schedule 5 with a footnote that the Seaham call excludes 10-car operation and a footnote dating the rights to expire in December 2026 and we request in its directions ORR expresses no presumption of continuity.

- 7.2 We have also confirmed in this representation letter that we do not support the new additional access rights sought to and from London on the ECML in this application as they are not included in the proposed ECML December 2025 Timetable and are on a line of Route which is declared as Congested Infrastructure once the December 2025 Timetable commences. These rights are over and above the modelled December 2025 East Coast Main Line timetable, and over the Welwyn Viaduct, and consequently a further worsening of performance could be expected. In addition, we have also provided an explanation to ORR of what the proposed ECML December 2025 Timetable is an amalgamation of, in terms of Advanced Timetable Work, and confirmed that our position is based on these assessments.
- 7.3 Network Rail has also highlighted in this letter a number of points we raised in our original representation letter. These are of points of clarification and amendments required to the proposed SA submitted with this application, that Network Rail believes have still not been fully addressed or that ORR need to take into consideration when making a direction on the application.
- 7.4 The proposed ECML December 2025 Timetable is the output of all the collaboration the industry has undertaken since the ECML ESG was formed in 2019. Our position on this application is an output of that work.

Yours sincerely,



Mark Garner, Customer Manager, Eastern Region, Network Rail

# ANNEXES

Annex A – Interacting Locations Matrix Annex B – Table of Passenger Train Slots Requested in Application

## ANNEX A SUMMARY OF APPLICATIONS AT INTERACTING LOCATIONS AND STATUS

Operator/Application/Type	Status of Application	WCML south	Birmingham	BHM-Derby	Derby-	Sheffield	<b>ECML&amp;Leed</b>	Oxford	Gloucester	Cardiff
Alliance Rail Cardiff - Edinburgh 17	Live		х	х	х	х	х		х	х
Avanti 3rd SA 22a	Live	x	х							
Avanti 11th SA 22A	Withdrawn	х	х							
Avanti 14th SA 22A	Withdrawn	х	х		-		-	-		_
Avanti 17th SA 22a	Live	х	Х							
Avanti 18th SA 22a	Live	х								
Colas 10th SA 22a	Live		~	X	X	X	X	~	~	X
CrossCountry 38th SA 22a DBC 72nd SA 22a	Live Live		х	х	x x	x x	x x	х	x	х
DBC 73rd SA 22a	Live				^	x	x			
DBC 79th SA 22a	Live			х		^	x	х		х
DBC 81st SA 22a	Live		х	x	х	х	x	x	х	x
DBC 86th SA 22a	Live		^	^	^	x	x	Â	~	
DBC 87th SA 22a	Live		х	х	х	x	x		х	х
DBC 88th SA 22a	Live				х	х	х			
DBC 83rd SA 22a	Live	х								
DBC 84th SA 22a	Live							х		
DBC 85th SA 22a	Live									
DBC 91st SA 22a	Withdrawn	х								
DBC 92nd SA 22a	Live									х
DCR 2nd SA 22a	Live	х	х	х	х		х	х		
DRS 17th SA 22A	Live	х	х	х	х	х	х		х	х
EMR 19th SA 22A	Live						х			
EMR 20th SA 22A	Live				х	х	х			
EMR 21st SA 22A	Live				х	х	х			
FLHH 24th SA 22A	Live	х						Х		
FLHH 25th SA 22A	Live	х	х	х	х	х	х	х	х	_
FLHH 26th SA 22A	Live	<u> </u>			х	х	х	1		
FLHH 27th SA 22A	Live	х	х	х	х	х	х	х	x	х
FLHH 28th SA 22A	Live	х	х	х	х	х	х	х	x	х
FLIM 21st SA 22A	Live	<u> </u>	х	х	х	х	х	х		_
FLIM 22nd SA 22A	Live		х	х	х	x	х	х		
FLIM 23rd SA 22A	Live	х	х							
FLIM 24th SA 22A	Live	х	х	х	х	х	х	х		
FLIM 25th SA 22A	Live	х	х	х		х	х	х		х
FLIM 26th SA 22A	Live	х			х	х	х	х		х
GBRf 25th SA 22a	Live	х	х	х	х	x	х	х		
GBRf 34th SA 22a	Live	х	х	х	х	x	X	х	x	х
GBRF 41st SA 22A	Live						X			
Govia Thames Railway 62nd SA 22A	Live						X			
Govia Thames Railway 63rd SA 22A Grand Central 24th SA 22A	Live Directed by ORR						x x			
Grand Central 24th SA 22A	Live						x			
GWR 201st SA 22a	Live						^	х	х	
GWR 201st SA 22a	Live							<b>^</b>	x	
Hull Trains 27th SA 22A	Live					x	х		Â	
Hull Trains 28th SA 22A	Directed by ORR					~	x			
Hull Trains 29th SA 22A	Live									
(re-numbered to the 32nd SA)							х			
LIS 2nd SA 22a	Live						х			
LNER 34th SA 22A	Live						х			
LNER 35th SA 22A May '28	Live						х			
LNER 36th SA 22A	Live						х			
	Rights were being sought until Dec 2025 so not	1						1		
LNER 37th SA 22A										
LNER 37th SA 22A	included in analysis						х			
LNER 37th SA 22A LNER 38th SA 22A	included in analysis Live						x x			
LNER 38th SA 22A							x			
	Live									
LNER 38th SA 22A Lumo 11th SA 22A (re-numbered to the 16th SA)	Live						x x			
LNER 38th SA 22A Lumo 11th SA 22A	Live Live	×					x			
LNER 38th SA 22A Lumo 11th SA 22A (re-numbered to the 16th SA) Lumo 12th SA 22A (re-numbered to the 17th SA)	Live Live Live Directed by ORR (some of the access rights in this application were withdrawn before direction and	x			x		x x			
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## ANNEX B - Table of Access Rights Requested on ECML - Passenger

	number	Group	Service Code	From:	To:	rights being sought?	current rights held in line with the ECML Policy? Y/N	How long are the rights being sought for? I.e. One TT Period, until expiry date of TAC	Weekday	S	Sat	Sur	n	for The Origin & Destination in the Application as expected for proposed Dec	Quantum of Rights (by Day) in the Application as expected for proposed	patterns for the v access rights in F the Application as expected for proposed Dec 25 ECML TT?	Explanation of any changes to "No" answers that were listed in Annex B included in the ECML General Representation dated 14 March 2025	WCML south	Birmingham	BHM-Derby Doctor: Choefficial	effield	ECML&Leeds	Oxford	Gloucester	Cardiff
Grand Central	28th	EC01	21755001	London King's Cross	York	Firm	No	Expiry date of TAC	1		1		1	No	No	No						х			
Grand Central	28th	EC01	21755001	York	London King's Cross	Firm	No	Expiry date	1		1		1	No	No	No						x			
Grand Central	28th	EC02	21756006	Bradford Interchange	London King's Cross	Firm	No	Expiry date of TAC	2		2		1	No	No	No						х			
Grand Central	28th	EC02	21756006	London King's Cross	Bradford Interchange	Firm	No	Expiry date of TAC	2		2		1	No	No	No						x			
Grand Central	28th		21756006	London King's Cross	Wakefield Kirkgate	Firm	No	Expiry date of TAC	1		1			No	No	No						x			
Grand Central	28th	EC02	21756006	Bradford	Wakefield Kirkgate	Firm	No	Expiry date of TAC	2		2		2	No	No	c a	Further review demonstrates we can now support contingent rights for the quantum (passenger train slots) and calling pattern for some of these services as explained in the final representation letter.								
Grand Central	28th	EC02	21756006	Wakefield Kirkgate	Bradford	Firm	No	Expiry date of TAC	2		2		2	No	No	No F c	Further review demonstrates we can now support contingent rights for the quantum (passenger train slots) and calling pattern for some of these services as explained in the final representation letter.								

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