



Fiona Dolman  
Capacity Planning Director  
Telephone 07515 620 064  
Email [Fiona.DOLMAN@networkrail.co.uk](mailto:Fiona.DOLMAN@networkrail.co.uk)

19 August 2015

**To**

John Larkinson  
Director, Economic Regulation  
Office of Rail and Road

Dear John,

**Access to the East Coast Main Line in 2020 – further performance and capacity questions**

Thank you for your letter of 12 August regarding the above. In your letter you ask Network Rail to consider two areas of work to support ORR decision making; further performance assessment and the provision of more information regarding infrastructure works and capacity. In relation to the latter, I can confirm that we will be able to provide a detailed response to the questions set out in your letter by Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> October.

In relation to further performance assessment, you asked that we consider developing and performance modelling standard two hourly repeating timetables for 7, 7.5 and 8 tph using VTEC's indicative timetables as a starting point. You asked us how quickly we could do this work and its likely benefits and for a response by 19 August. This letter provides a response to these questions.

There are a number of ways in which the performance impact of the timetable can be developed. The industry's recognized tool right now is RailSys so this letter sets out timeframes to undertake RailSys modelling to reach a conclusion. Using this approach can be time-consuming and it doesn't provide a PPM indication, we know that in an environment where capacity is becoming a premium and high performance is required that we need better tools to support decision making and are starting to consider how we might address this gap.

We don't want to be constrained by our current toolset and so we are also in the process of investigating other methods of performance modelling that may provide a helpful insight in a timelier manner. We are engaging directly with VTEC following their feedback and exploring their suggestions and ideas for alternative methods of analysis. We will contact you to discuss further if we are able to develop any of these into something that may be a viable alternative.

In order to undertake performance analysis in RailSys and to obtain an output which gives a meaningful insight into performance robustness of a timetable it is essential that a de-conflicted timetable is used which includes all significant interactions between all services. At present for the ECML in 2020 no such detailed timetable exists including all service interactions with proposed Long Distance High Speed (LDHS) services. In particular there are notable uncertainties associated with interactions between LDHS services and those operated by GTR and by the Trans Pennine and Northern franchises.

Based on our experience gained through previous pieces of complex timetable development work and given that work has not yet begun to create a full timetable containing valid and viable paths for all conflicting operators and that three separate timetables are being requested for simulation we believe that there is a substantial amount of work to undertake before detailed RailSys analysis can be undertaken as described above.

Development of a suitably detailed timetable including de-confliction for other services for a 7, 7.5 and 8 LDHS tph timetable would take around six-seven months and would require an input Train Service Specification for all operators to be included in the model area. Undertaking a comparison of these services in RailSys would take a further five months. In short we believe that we are currently too early in the process for RailSys analysis to be undertaken.

Alternatively a piece of analysis could be undertaken in RailSys that assesses only the LDHS services. This piece of work could use VTEC's indicative timetables as the only services in the model and would take around eight weeks, providing as an output 'comparative average minutes lateness for a subset of services that could operate on the ECML in 2020'. In our view this piece of work would add little insight to the expected performance of the ECML, given that the most significant risks to performance are expected to be the interaction between LDHS services and other operators on the route.

Our recommendation at this stage to provide a greater insight into the likely impact on performance of a 7 7.5 and 8 tph service on the ECML is to undertake a workshop with experts from across the industry to provide an indicative PPM estimate based on the building up of the PPM impact of the expected features of the timetable. This approach would provide a greater level of detail / transparency around the estimated PPM value than currently exists and we believe that this approach is more appropriate given the current level of detail available about the

timetable.

I hope this letter is helpful in setting out the options that are available to undertake further analysis. We will proceed with our recommended option, whilst also pursuing alternative options and will keep you updated on progress.

Please do get in touch with me if you would like to discuss further.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Fiona Dolman', written over a light grey rectangular background.

Fiona Dolman

Capacity Planning Director