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22 June 2015

Copy list below - **by email only**

Dear colleague

Access to the East Coast Main Line: industry hearing follow-up

1. Thank you for coming to the hearing on Friday 12 June. We found it very worthwhile for discussing the many and varied issues we still need to address before our Board decides the applications we are considering.
2. This letter sets out our next steps; there are two deadlines to be aware of: 29 June for transcript comments and 10 July for comments on performance modelling (see below).
3. For those of you who spoke, please find attached the **draft transcript**. If you want to propose changes please let us have them by close on Monday 29 June. Please would one person from each organisation coordinate your response, which should be sent to david.reed@orr.gsi.gov.uk.
4. We use Hansard style rules for transcripts, meaning you should not change the substance of what you said but can correct for stumbles, repetition or obvious mistakes including grammar. We expect to circulate the final transcript to all who attended the hearing and to publish it on our web site around Monday 6 July.
5. We are updating our project plan for considering these applications. This will include some immediate actions around the CH2M Hill report and performance modelling, which I set out below. We are also setting up additional meetings, including with Hull Trains and Grand Central, as suggested at the hearing.
4. As you know, we received a lot of comments from two applicants and DfT on the **CH2M HILL report** just before the hearing, many of which we discussed on the day. Some important themes emerged, including around transparency, quality assurance of the analysis and specific refinements to the report methodology. We are reflecting on what further engagement and review is needed to address these points, which we will build into our project plan. We are also compiling an issues log and we will set out our response to each issue and any action we take to address them. You will have an opportunity to

comment on our responses and the action taken. CH2M HILL will issue a draft revised report once we are satisfied all the relevant concerns have been dealt with.

6. It is clear we will need a further discussion about the revised report with the applicants and DfT as a minimum and we will talk to them about when that should be and what form it should take.

7. One of the other significant issues raised at the hearing was around **performance** modelling, where radically different views were expressed. Virgin Trains East Coast said that detailed performance modelling should be undertaken before we approve any access rights. The other applicants took the view that once flexible access rights are approved, Network Rail and all ECML operators will work together through the usual Event Steering Group (ESG) process to develop a robust timetable; detailed modelling may be useful then but not before. Network Rail agreed that the performance impact needed to be considered carefully and said that without a detailed timetable in advance of the approval of rights it would need to work closely with operators as the timetable developed.

8. Detailed performance modelling normally requires a detailed timetable as input. As there are different combinations of access rights which could be approved, developing detailed timetables for every combination could be a very lengthy and resource intensive process. Furthermore, the actual timetable to be run will still need to be developed over an extended period through the collaborative process of an ESG.

9. To reach a conclusion on this particular aspect we require each applicant, DfT and Network Rail to let us have written representations by Friday 10 July explaining what, if any, performance analysis they think needs to be done before we make any access decisions, their reasons, what inputs the analysis would require, how detailed the work should be and how long they believe this should take. Network Rail should be able to comment on the resource implications in more detail. We would also like to hear views on what would need to happen next if this work confirmed a performance impact, including what inputs and resources would be required and how this would impact the usual industry ESG processes.

10. Finally, several criticisms have been made about our **process**. Some of these relate to concerns that a safe decision cannot be made on the basis of the CH2M HILL report and without further performance analysis. We have set out above the initial steps we are taking in relation to these concerns. In addition, Alliance in particular criticised our consideration of First Group's proposals and the sharing of indicative timetables between the applicants. We will discuss these issues with those who made them or more broadly if appropriate.

11. We will write to everyone again once we have seen and reflected on the views on performance modelling, completed our issues log and updated our project plan.

Yours sincerely



John Larkinson

Copies to:

Andy Sparkes (VTEC)
Ian Yeowart (GNER)
Leo Goodwin (East Coast Trains Ltd)
Chris Burchell (Arriva Group)
Tim Wright (Network Rail)
Paul McMahon (Network Rail)
Peter Craig (Network Rail)

Andrew Murray (DfT)
Steven McMahon (Transport Scotland)
Phil Dawson (VTEC)
John Beer (GTR)
Other current ECML operators
Transport Focus/London TravelWatch