

The Core Valley Lines – freight services track access contracts

Background

1. This is an ORR guidance note concerning the use of freight services track access contracts on the Core Valley Lines (CVL). It explains the changes to the model freight services track access contract to reflect the arrangements made for freight traffic spanning the CVL and Network Rail networks.
2. The Core Valley Lines is 85 route miles of network. The lines are Cardiff Bay via Cardiff Queen Street to Rhymney and Coryton, plus the routes from Cardiff Queen Street North Junction to Merthyr Tydfil, Aberdare and Treherbert, with freight lines to Hirwaun and Cwmbargoed.
3. The ‘East boundary’ is the boundary point between CVL and Network Rail between Cardiff Central and Cardiff Queen Street. The ‘West Boundary’ is the boundary point between CVL and Network Rail on the Treforest Line.
4. Network Rail transferred the CVL Network to Transport for Wales and although it ceased to be the infrastructure manager it still provides some services on a transitional basis, such as signalling, welding and delay attribution. It will validate train paths as part of the national rail timetable on a permanent basis. It also manages the performance and possessions regime under a bilateral agreement between the two infrastructure managers. The appointed CVL infrastructure manager is Amey Keolis Infrastructure/Seilwaith Amey Keolis Limited (AKIL).

CVL access contracts

5. Freight train operating companies (FOCs) wishing to use the CVL will need individual track access contracts with AKIL. Certain FOCs already have entered into ORR-approved access contracts with AKIL. FOCs that wish to apply for a contract should contact AKIL.

Network Rail contracts

6. Changes were required to the Network Rail track access agreements (“NR TAC”) for all operators using the CVL. Certain FOCs have already amended their existing track access contracts with Network Rail. On the assumption that new freight train operators would prefer to have the option of accessing the CVL available, ORR has updated its model track access contracts.

Schedule 4 – Variations to Services

7. Network Rail will manage the *Schedule 4 Restriction of Use* compensation regime on behalf of AKIL for incidents occurring on both CVL and Network Rail networks (jointly the “Combined Network”). This service is driven by the implementation of the linkages between Schedule 4 and Schedule 8. Certain clauses in the revised Schedule 4 and references to the Combined Network reflect this arrangement.

Schedule 5 - Services

8. For traffic that spans the Network Rail and CVL boundaries, the Access Rights will have Windows, departure and arrival windows, origins, destinations and contract miles that reflect the CVL-Network Rail boundaries. Footnotes or non-contractual comments can be used for the purposes of pathing continuity and timetable planning.

Schedule 8 – Performance Regime

9. An issue for AKIL, Network Rail and FOCs is the ability to manage performance, and specifically cross-boundary delays. To address this AKIL and Network Rail developed the 'Single Star Model'. The aim is to ensure operators see no material change in how Delay Attribution and Schedule 8 functions function, compared to as is Network Rail had continued to manage CVL. Network Rail is the Performance Regime Operator ('PRO') and applies the Single Star Model across both networks and undertakes Delay Attribution accordingly.
10. The terms of the Single Star Model are agreed between AKIL and Network Rail through their Infrastructure Manager Agreement. Amendments have been made to Schedule 8 of the model freight services track access contract to reflect and facilitate this arrangement. There were no changes to the Delay Attribution Principles and Rules.

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