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03<sup>rd</sup> April 2020

Dear Jonathan

**Proposed amendments to the track access contract between Network Rail Infrastructure Limited and West Midlands Trains Limited through the proposed 4<sup>th</sup> Supplemental Agreement.**

I write in response to your email dated 16<sup>th</sup> March in which you seek clarity on a number of items, which I will address in turn.

**1. Does Network Rail consider that there is sufficient capacity for WMT's proposed additional services?**

The request for the additional access rights between Northampton and London Euston requires the Liverpool to London Euston services, which already have rights, to be amended to run on the fast lines, in order to allow the additional service on the slow lines.

Network Rail recently completed a capacity report, at the request of the ORR, titled "West Coast main Line Capacity Assessment 2020" which reviewed the capacity of the West Coast Mainline (WCML) fast lines. The report concluded that there is no available capacity without significantly impacting performance and causing a reduction in timetable resilience. Whilst limited capacity was identified there was not a consistent hourly path in both directions.

These proposed services also cause an additional platform occupation of up to 45 minutes per hour at Euston, at a time when Euston is already operating with reduced number of platforms due to HS2, with only 16 platforms now available. Although it may be possible to platform the new trains, this is accompanied by a material increase in overall platform occupancy rates. The impact will be felt in terms of train performance, especially in times of significant disruption. Whilst the platforming for December '20 Timetable has not yet been

completed, these additional services will further constrain the flexibility of the platforming arrangements at London Euston, thus further impacting the resilience of the timetable.

The position of platform occupancy and the risk to timetable robustness is further affected by the introduction of 5 new services a day between London Euston and Blackpool, operated by Grand Central, already in possession of track access rights.

The proposal also introduces an additional crossing movement at Ledburn Jn, increasing the number of crossing moves from 2 trains per hour (tph) to 3tph, a significant increase in capacity utilisation at the junction. The effect of this will also be an increase on the number of successive moves planned using minimum headway and junction margins which will add to the instability of the timetable.

From current performance analysis we know that in the Up direction minor delays, that may have been caused elsewhere on the network, are being realised at Ledburn Junction. Poor presentation at Ledburn Junction in the Up direction is then causing Down trains which require to cross to lose time and perturb the network. The current quantum of services in the timetable allows minimal opportunity to recover lateness and recovery back to plan is not realised.

Capacity utilisation of the WCML fast lines is currently 86% in hours with 13 paths, and 80% of capacity in hours where there are 12 paths. This is above the recommended maximum capacity to be able to run a reliable railways recommended in the Union of Railways UIC Code 406 report. The report recommends the following maximum capacity levels:

Type of line	Peak hour	Daily period
Dedicated suburban passenger traffic	85 %	70 %
Dedicated high-speed line	75 %	60 %
Mixed-traffic lines	75 %	60 %

Performance on WMT's Northampton Service Group, for which these additional rights are for, has declined considerably over the past 3 years. The table below shows WMT Northampton Service Group Right time at Destination and PPM MAA at Period 12 for the last 3 Years.

Measure	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Right Time at Destination	48.3%	46.9%	37.0%
PPM	79.9%	80.6%	69.1%

Reactionary Delay caused by each operator between Northampton and Euston has also increased since May 2018, demonstrating that resilience in the timetable has been eroded.

The table below shows all reactionary delay caused between Northampton and Euston by operative, irrespective of who is responsible for the incident.

Operator	Timetable Period			
	May 2018	December 2018	May 2019	December 2019 up Period 12
Avanti West Coast	66,597	38,049	87,005	23,374
Caledonian Sleeper	1,602	1,192	3,292	288
DB Cargo	2,774	2,517	4,320	1,699
DCR	36	43	84	80
DRS	947	996	827	317
Freightliner Intermodal	14,001	9,674	17,453	5,140
GB Railfreight	4,672	3,404	6,393	2,093
GTR	8,065	5,127	11,199	3,367
London Overground	7,953	5,103	12,349	5,181
West Midlands Trains	83,532	47,740	140,145	40,694
<b>Total</b>	<b>190,179</b>	<b>113,845</b>	<b>283,067</b>	<b>82,233</b>

- 2. Please comment on the potential performance impact that would result from WMT’s proposed additional services. Paragraph 4 of WMT’s letter to ORR of 23 January, refers to the Treno performance modelling that has been undertaken and indicates that the operation of the proposed services will have no material negative impact. The letter also indicates that the modelling regarding significant disruption is expected to show significant service recovery benefits. Please comment on this performance modelling. Do you agree with WMT’s views on it?**

The modelling undertaken shows a minor improvement of performance on a “poor” day due to the proposed changes in the resource plan, however average lateness and performance on a “good” day deteriorates. The modelling also shows an increase in sub threshold delay and small perturbation. These changes would lead to degradation of T-1 punctuality for both Avanti West Coast and WMT, and when modelling T-3 WMT encounters increased degradation although there is no further impact on Avanti west Coast. However, what is also important is what was *not* included in the modelling.

The modelling scenarios undertaken did not include the impact of significant disruption, including times of line blockage of one or two tracks. Therefore, the impact of the additional services during significant disruption is currently unknown. In addition, the impact of platform occupancy at Euston was not included in the modelling.

The experience of the May 2019 WMT timetable is the linkage of different service groups across Birmingham, for example the Euston – Birmingham – Liverpool services, is a major component of current poor performance. The area modelled did not take into account the significant changes in the Birmingham area due to be introduced in the May’20 timetable and only assessed the performance impact between Northampton and London Euston.

The modelling does not take into consideration the crew diagramming of the services, and the diagrams have not been shared with Network Rail. The small benefit realised from

separating the units on different service groups can only be realised if the crew diagrams are also segregated, and this has not been demonstrated

For these reasons Network Rail does not believe the Treno Modelling provides enough evidence to support the introduction of these services.

**3. Can you confirm if there is sufficient infrastructure capability, particularly in relation to power supply, to support the proposed additional services?**

There is a known constraint on the WCML South in the portion of track fed from Acton Lane Feeder Station (Wembley MPATS to Euston) where we are experiencing infrastructure power outages due to overloading especially during peak hours. Additional services, particularly during the peak, would likely increase power outages. Any n-1 scenario would cause power draw to increase to 140% or even above. Consequently, that is not a relevant issue in the case of the WMT proposal. However, current normal operation runs at approx. 91% of the power supply available Wembley to Bushey. The WMT proposal (addition of one 4 car unit, e.g. class 350) would represent only a marginal increase, but if run during the peak, it may be the tipping point for the system to trip-out.

**4. Does Network Rail support the sale of these access rights?**

Taking into consideration all of the above points Network Rail is not supportive of WMT's application for additional rights on the mainline and their proposed 4<sup>th</sup> supplemental agreement.

Yours Faithfully

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "M. A. Woolmore", enclosed within a blue oval.

Michelle Woolmore  
NW&C, Route Contracts Manager.