
TIMETABLING COMMITTEE

Extraordinary note of deliberations (meeting at Kings Cross on 16th September 1999)

This is an extraordinary note of deliberations by the Timetabling Committee at a meeting held to address representations received from English Welsh & Scottish Railway (EWS) and Railtrack concerning five issues which had been submitted in a formal joint reference. The Committee heard from the Parties that two items had been withdrawn. After receiving brief statements from the Parties on two other items, the Committee agreed that the Parties should continue discussions between themselves and, if the issues were not resolved, submit an updated joint reference on the issues for a reconvened hearing.

The Committee then commenced formal hearing of the fifth issue, concerned with changes sought by EWS to the Rules of the Route consequent upon the opening of the new Royal Mail Terminal at Bristol Parkway.

It was apparent during questions of the Parties by the Committee that there was a lack of commonality of understanding, an inadequacy of knowledge of relevant factors such as the impact of diversionary options, or the use of bi-directional signalling and the effect of train reversal en route. The Committee was concerned that there had been a lack of conviction by the Parties to resolve the issues surrounding the routing of trains. It was apparent that the Parties were not sufficiently prepared for the case to be heard by the Committee. The Committee therefore decided to adjourn the hearing and give opportunity to the Parties to clarify the issues and, if a dispute still remained, to remedy the deficiencies in their submission.

Furthermore, and this was of great concern to the Committee, the problems with the Parkway terminal had been known since 1996 and should have been considered as part of the formal process of Network Change. In particular many of the procedures, and associated costs, of the working at the terminal, given the necessity of a changing pattern of train services consistent with Railtrack needing to maintain its network, have been inadequately addressed.

The Parties have therefore been instructed to resume discussions on the basis of a common understanding of information relating to Rules of the Route, Railtrack's proposed timings and the working arrangements at Bristol Parkway Royal Mail Terminal and any other affected locations. In the event of the Parties failing to resolve the dispute then they must make a further jointly agreed submission, with a request that the Dispute Hearing be reconvened.

The Committee also noted, during its reading of the background papers, a comment in a letter from one of the Parties to the other stating that further discussion on the matter cannot take place because it is 'subject to the ADRC'. This is not the case. The Committee wishes to make clear that there is nothing to prevent the Parties, after submission of a reference, continuing direct discussions in an effort to resolve the issues themselves without waiting for the Committee to meet and to determine the issues for them. Indeed it is a matter of Committee policy that Parties are always encouraged to continue discussions towards resolving disputes themselves right up until the day and time of the hearing.

Bryan Driver,

Chairman,
16th September 1999