

TTP2590 – The Chiltern Railway Company Limited (“Chiltern”) Claimant Submission

Network Rail Infrastructure Limited (“Network Rail”) included proposed increases to several junction margins and adjustments to sectional running times at Banbury in the Timetable Planning Rules for 2026, Version 1 (the Draft Rules). Chiltern’s representations in respect of the Draft Rules included requests that a timetable impact assessment be undertaken to understand the consequences of the proposed changes to the rules at Banbury, and that the data which informed the changes be provided to Chiltern to review the supporting evidence for the revisions. Three counter proposals were submitted based upon data collected by Chiltern for value reductions at Banbury and Banbury Depot Junction.

Network Rail supplied the requested supporting data on 6th December 2024. A revised copy of the Banbury rules was also distributed with one junction margin further increased by a half minute compared to the Draft Rules.

On 10th January 2025, a meeting was held to discuss the Banbury rules. Chiltern reiterated its request for a timetable impact assessment and raised concerns related to the data which was used to calculate the proposed values. Data issues included:

- the time taken to arrive at Banbury Platform 1 after passing OL3103 signal being longer than the time taken from passing OL3101 signal, despite OL3103 being the closer signal to Banbury; and,
- the time taken for a train to clear Banbury Depot Junction after departing from Banbury Platform 4 being one minute shorter than manual timing runs undertaken by Chiltern – evidence being provided to Network Rail in advance of the meeting at their request on 7th January 2025.

Whilst the minutes from the meeting were not distributed, Chiltern came away with the understanding that the rules would be reviewed and possibly deferred to Version 3. However, the published Timetable Planning Rules for 2026, Version 2 contained rules at Banbury unchanged from those distributed on 6th December 2024. Network Rail issued an associated Decision which stated a) the Banbury rules contained in Version 2 will be used to validate Priority Date submissions; b) *“if the timetable impact study or the timetable itself reveals any negative effects, we [Network Rail] will revert to the 2025 rules (V4.1) by issuing version 2.1 or a subsequent update”*; and, c) a commitment to collaboration to ensure rules are accurate.

Chiltern’s dispute is brought on the basis that a timetable impact assessment has not yet been undertaken and that Chiltern believes there are issues with the data used to calculate the revised values. Therefore, Chiltern considers that the basis upon which Network Rail has come to their decisions in line with Network Code Conditions D4.1 and D4.6 is flawed.

The approach taken by Network Rail also goes against two of the Guiding Principles for amending values in the Timetable Planning Rules by a) not having yet undertaken a timetable impact assessment; and b) that the evidence supporting the changes has not been agreed by Chiltern (National Version 2 Timetable Planning Rules for 2026 Sections 1.2.3 and 1.2.7).

Chiltern are seeking that the revised junction margins and sectional running times at Banbury are withdrawn with those contained in the 2025 Timetable Planning Rules, Version 4.1 reinstated accordingly as an update to the 2026 Rules.

Chiltern do not believe that exceptional circumstances apply to this dispute in line with Network Code Condition D5.3.1(c).



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