

TTP2673 - Network Rail's decision in relation to late notice engineering access in Week 18, 2025.

Network Rail's Understanding of The Background to The Dispute:

Network Rail had planned in conjunction with HS2 to take a possession between Proof House Junction and Aston South Junction for a bridge to be moved into position at the Curzon Street Terminus in Birmingham. This item was published in the Confirmed Period Possession Plan (CPPP) for weeks 17 to 20. Also in the same Week, a Possession between Aston North Junction and Lichfield Trent Valley High Level was published as P2025/4114896 for the removal of scaffolding from the Gravelly Hill Interchange that is built over the railway between Aston and Erdington. Following the Publication of the CPPP further work applications were made which led to a late notice Possession Amendment being made which Blocked the route from Aston to Stechford. The duration of this part of the Access was 7 days between 0600 Monday 28th July and 0040 Monday 4th August. At this point, the route for Freight Traffic was blocked between Stechford / Aston and Perry Barr.

Network Rail were made aware through a Train Operating Company (West Midlands Trains) (WMT) that the HS2 work was to be cancelled. A Disruptive Access Form was received and the Possession Duration went to 2 days (the 2nd to 4th of August) vice 7. This was notified out and operators were free to bid via the Stechford / Aston / Perry Barr route for the duration of week 18.

It became quickly apparent that the importance of other work in the possession meant that the access should never have been reduced, and communications took place with WMT and Freight Operating Companies (FOCs), about Network Rail's desire to re-instate the access time to 7 days as previously planned. Train Planning Were Consulted. WMT advised that a decision was needed promptly to allow for the reinstatement of Rail Replacement Road Service Transport which had been cancelled.

It should be stated that through conversation, Network Rail were aware that both Direct Rail Services and GBRF were not in favour of the restoration of the 7 days of access.

In respect to GBRF, Network Rail were advised that the train plan that had been uploaded for the 7 days of the possession was not favourable due to lack of capacity at Hams Hall where additional run rounds were planned and the lack of ground staff resources to be working at both Hams Hall and Duddleston Junction to facilitate the additional run round moves. Hence it was clear that GBRF would not support the reinstatement of 7 days of possession access between Stechford and Aston.

Consequently, the decision was escalated to senior executive team members in Network Rail who spoke to TOC and FOC colleagues at exec level to secure agreement.

The dispute was entered due to a decision document being issued by Network Rail, without agreement from GBRF on Friday 4th July. It should be noted that Network Rail did not send out a request document for this change, but proceeded straight to the decision document.

Network Rail's Central Executive Team is still attempting to reach agreement with GBRF and GBRF Planning and Network Rail Planning have a meeting booked for tomorrow (10th July) where further attempts at resolution will be made.

Practical And Specific Outcome Network Rail is Seeking from The Dispute:

Network Rail is seeking that the Possession Planned for Week 18 (P2025/4005032) between Proof House Junction and Perry Barr North Junction / Lichfield Trent Valley is permitted to take place.

Exceptional Circumstances (Network Code Chapter D 5.3.1(c))

None to be considered as part of the dispute hearing from Network Rail's perspective.