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Dear Stephen

Grand Central writes to Network Rail to formally respond to the notification of non-accommodation of fourteen train slots in the New Working Timetable (December 2025).

The letter states that the greatest weight behind the decision has been given to “*criterion D4.6.2(c) - maintaining and improving train service performance*” however none of the services listed were included in the performance modelling and as such, there is a lack of numerical evidence or specific details to substantiate claims on degrading performance. In the first instance, the performance modelling only considered the Monday to Friday timetable and then only services that run north of Stevenage in the window from 1400 to 2000; as a result, we are struggling to understand how any conclusions can be drawn about the proposed Grand Central paths that operate completely outside this window.

In the absence of detailed evidence to validate Network Rail’s argument on performance, Grand Central has no specific detail or evidence to further work on any of the services listed; as a result, believes that its Access Proposal submitted at D-40 does not cause any performance concerns. Grand Central in the first instance recommends that Network Rail flexes our Access Proposal (in accordance with D4.2.2(c)) submitted at D-40 and add <1> on all Up services approaching Hitchin and all Down services approaching Doncaster. This will enable provision of a generic performance “buffer” within the Grand Central schedules which Grand Central is offering, in good faith, in response to Network Rail’s concerns, although Grand Central does not believe that these allowances are required. The rationale being in the Up direction, this additional allowance will help reduce the potential impact on GTR services as their T-3 % on the East Coast is 79.8% compared to LDHS services which are all above 90%. For the Down direction, the approach to Doncaster was chosen to mitigate concerns raised about potential knock-on impacts to other services on the EMCL North, North East and East Midlands Route.

Grand Central also wishes to seek further clarity from Network Rail as to whether the paths are TPR compliant. The letter does not at any point specifically state that the train slots requested by Grand Central cannot be accommodated on the grounds of compliance with the “Rules” (whether TPR or EAS). Whilst there are some references to platforming issues, we believe that the issues raised are no more significant than any timetable clashes that would be de-conflicted during any timetable validation between D-40 and D-26.

Grand Central recognises Network Rail’s notification of “non-accommodation” of the fourteen train slots in question as advance notice of Network Rail’s intention not to publish these in the New Working Timetable at D-26. As stated above, Grand Central believes that the train slots submitted in our Access Proposal at the Priority Date are compliant and should be accommodated within the December 2025 New Working Timetable and, as such, reserves the right to appeal under Condition D2.7.4. of *The Network Code*.