

Omowunmi Toby  
Franchise and Access Manager  
Network Rail Infrastructure Ltd  
Baskerville House  
Centenary Square  
Birmingham  
B1 2ND

Alice Kaiser  
Office of Rail and Road  
25 Cabot Square  
London  
WC2B 4AN

20 June 2025

**Network Rail Representations for the 17th Supplemental Agreement submitted under Section 22A of the Railways Act 1993 for the Track Access Contract between Network Rail Infrastructure Limited and First Trenitalia West Coast Rail Limited dated 01 December 2025.**

### **Purpose**

This letter provides final representations from Network Rail (NR) for the 17th Supplemental agreement submitted under Section 22A of the Railways Act 1993 for the Track Access Application between Network Rail and First Trenitalia West Coast Rail Limited (FTWCRL) dated 01 December 2025.

This representation builds upon the representations submitted by NR for this application on 28 June 2024 and two representations relating to WCML South dated 07 February 2025 and 25 April 2025.

The purpose of this final representation is to provide ORR with Network Rail's final position on this application (and the specific access rights within it) and will do so by providing facts, data, evidence to support our position.

Network Rail can confirm that based on the facts, data and evidence outlined in this representation, it is supportive of a part of this application.

Where there are a number of applications seeking capacity at the locations referred to in this letter, and as detailed in Annex A, the basis of our support of applications either in total, or in part (as can be determined by reading the relevant representations), may have a connection to our position on all other applications at that location. You may wish to wait for final representations on related applications and the information provided therein prior to making your decision.

## **Background of the Application and Network Rail Representations**

In line with ORR's letter of 24 April 2024 to the industry on 'Competing and/or complex track access applications for December 2024, May 2025, and December 2025 timetable changes', First Trenitalia West Coast Limited submitted this application to the ORR on 17 May 2024 as a S22A application in line with ORR's deadline.

As requested by ORR, Network Rail submitted a High-Level Plan in June 2024, and a further detailed plan was published on Network Rail's website in August 2024 and updated in January 2025. Network Rail made its initial representations on this application on 28 June 2024 where an initial view of the application Form P and SA was provided. On 22 July 2024 First Trenitalia West Coast Limited responded to the Network Rail initial representations.

In its initial representation on 28 June 2024, NR highlighted a number of items in the "NR Review of Form P and associated documents" section.

In this section we will highlight key points from the initial representation as well as any further comments we may have on the form P and associated documents, and where applicable the course of action taken or still outstanding. We will also address points raised by FTWCRL in their response to NR's representation where applicable.

The points we would like to highlight from the initial representation and the course of action we require, are as follows:

### **Safety**

In response to Section 3.2 of Form P, where it was marked as "N/A", implying no safety risks had been identified, NR stated, in its response of 28 June 2024, its intention to undertake due diligence and necessary assurance to assess any safety risks associated with the proposal.

In the WCML General Representation letters, we have highlighted certain safety concerns such as Passenger Flow at London Euston and detail this further in this letter. In addition to this, NR has now completed the appropriate risk assessments through the Timetable Change Risk Assessment Group (TCRAG) process and level crossing assessment, and no additional safety risks have been identified in relation to the access rights sought in this application.

### **Capacity**

In Section 4.2 of the Form P it stated "We know the capacity exists for these services as they were included in the Dec 22 ESG. These services were incorporated in the timetables developed by the WCML Industry Planning Group (IPG) and Event Steering Group (ESG) workstreams".

In our representation letter dated 28 June 2024, NR stated that interacting applications and capacity constraints at several locations across NW&C Region remained a concern. FTWCRL in its response dated 22 July 2024 stated the following;

"Both the 19:32 Chester to London Euston (SX) and 19:55 Crewe – London Euston (SU) were developed as part of the Industry Planning Group (IPG) and Event Steering Group (ESG) workstreams which culminated in the existing timetable structure. FTWCRL remain confident that the services within this application are deliverable with the network capacity available and will work collaboratively with industry partners to restore these services.

FTWCRL remain confident that capacity also exists for the 07:00 Manchester Piccadilly to London Euston (SX) and 09:43 Liverpool Lime Street – Birmingham New Street (continues to

London Euston) (SU); if rights are not granted, both services will be required to operate as an ECS movement regardless.”

Network Rail have undertaken timetable capacity and performance analysis, and power supply and platform availability have all been factored into the decision on our position.

Given the likely impacts as a result of introducing additional services on WCML South Fast Lines, Network Rail does not currently support any additional quantum access rights on the Fast Lines between Rugby and London Euston, with the exception of the two rights within this application, one Manchester Piccadilly to London Euston right and one Liverpool Lime Street to London Euston right sought within this application which we detail within this letter.

Network Rail understand that, if not granted, FTWCRL would require to run an ECS between Manchester and London Euston for rolling stock balancing purposes, and using capacity, regardless. Also as a part of this application, FTWCRL are seeking a material increase in quantum between Liverpool and Birmingham on Sundays (to enable the additional Liverpool to Euston right in the HF04 service group), which does not materially increase the quantum on the FL between Rugby and London Euston.

Network Rail are supportive of this additional right based on our capacity assessments, and assuming it is linked with the reduction of one Sunday right in service group HF01 between Wolverhampton and London Euston. Our support for this right is dependent on the relinquishment of the Wolverhampton to London Euston right.

For the benefit of passengers and freight users, it is Network Rail's view that Operational Performance across all operators on WCML South needs to both recover to, and be sustained at, a higher level than current performance before additional train services, which don't have rights, are considered for inclusion into the timetable.

### **Power supply**

FTWCRL raised points about power supply in their 22 July 2024 response as per below:

#### **Catterall & Harker feeding areas**

FTWCRL in their response to the NR representation letter also stated that 'NR have asserted five locations where power supply constraints exist. FTWCRL notes that two of these (Catterall & Harker feeding areas) were not the subject of the "early warning of congested infrastructure" letters. The latest statement from NR "NW&C Traction Power Capacity and Capability Overview" published in May 2024 shows Catterall as having "no significant concerns". FTWCRL would like to understand what has changed in the interim regarding this feeder station.

Harker was listed as a concern in December 2022, however when Network Rail remodelled this area using up-to-date assumptions, it found that it no longer had any concerns. Network Rail has made some changes with the Distribution Network Operator agreement at Catterall to raise the fault level (and therefore reduce the Negative Phase Sequence) and concluded that that this concluded the concern raised. There are currently no concerns for Harker and Catterall with regards to this application.

#### **Bushey Feeder Station Power Supply Upgrade**

In the Form P, FTWCRL stated that “NR supported the application from May 2025”. In their response to the representation, FTWCRL also stated that “except for the rights sought for two trains on the London Euston -- Blackpool North route (via the Trent Valley) the trains in this

application are already operating on the network via Bushey and do not therefore represent an additional quantum in the timetable or uplift in traction power supply demand at this location”.

Bushey Feeder Station Power Supply Upgrade, as planned at that time, has not been completed, however phase one of the upgrade is due to be completed ahead of the December 2025 timetable. This upgrade provides greater resilience and a reduction on the failure rate but no additional capacity. The most recent power modelling, undertaken in early 2025, has not highlighted any concerns at Bushey because of this.

Network Rail does not have any power supply concerns for the paths aligned to the particular rights we are supportive of in this application. Network Rail has already been working with FTWCRL to alleviate its power supply concerns in the Crewe-Weaver area. The opportunity to discuss the details of the power supply modelling undertaken by NR with ORR directly (focussing on the key constraints and times) would be welcomed. We are already in discussions with FTWCRL about power supply.

### **Performance**

In our initial representation NR noted that, in Section 4.3 of the Form P, FTWCRL provided TOC performance measurement data Time to 3 (T-3) for 2003-2012. However, the timetables on which this performance data is based are not comparable to the timetable running today due to the numerous incremental changes that took place since 2012, as well as the significant timetable restructure that took place in 2022. It is therefore not appropriate to use historical data from this period to assess this application.

FTWCRL in their response to NR’s representation letter, stated that following the introduction of Cl.805 into passenger service from 02/06/2024, FTWCRL and NR are collaborating to conduct a data-led evaluation of these trains’ performance. This study is expected to deliver preliminary results by the end of July 2024, at which point it will be possible to better understand the impact (if any) of their operation since introduction.

Analysis was undertaken to inform mitigations to the timetable from December 2024 and the result of this data-led evaluation of these trains performance indicated a low performance impact overall. With the support of NR System Operator and Capacity Planning, NR implemented a number of mitigations to limit the performance impact of Class 80X ahead of linespeed improvements being delivered, including public differentials at stations stops, to maximise the chance of right time starts and reducing the risk of punctuality failure. Ongoing monitoring of whole system elements impacting the operation of the 80X performance, which could affect Sectional Running Time adherence, remains in place.

NR has stated, in the WCML representations of 07 February 2025 and 25 April 2025, its performance concerns and the analysis in that letter has shown how the assessment has been made and the importance of spare capacity being available, to absorb sub threshold delays before locations where there are multiple services tightly flighted.

It is therefore reasonable to suggest that running these additional services, plus the likelihood of network perturbation, means firebreaks in the timetable will be eroded further, with perturbation taking longer to recover from, and having a greater than expected network reach.

Performance outcome, operational risks, extensive engineering plans, disruption to the train service and diversionary requirements are the reasons why NR is supportive of only some of the rights requested within this application.

### **Draft Supplemental Agreement**

In the draft SA provided with the application paragraph 1 (b) states the ““Effective Date” means the later of the date on which the parties enter into the terms of this SA pursuant to directions from ORR under Section 22A of the Act and 02:00 on 18 May 2025.” NR would expect the Supplemental Agreement to be updated to reflect a revised effective date of December 2025 Timetable Change Date.

### **West Coast Mainline (WCML) General Representation Letter dated 25 April 2025**

Network Rail can confirm that this application is seeking the proposed access rights at the interacting location WCML: Euston to Nuneaton and therefore the General Representation letters to ORR regarding WCML South Fast Lines dated 07 February 2025 and 25 April 2025 are relevant to this application. We would like to highlight key points which are more pertinent to this application, namely:

07 February 2025 Letter - Timetable Capacity, Timetable Performance, Passenger Flow at Euston Station, High Speed Two; and

25 April 2025 Letter - Performance Concerns Affecting WCML Applications, Power Supply, Congested Infrastructure and Complex and Competing Applications.

### **Access Rights Sought in the Application**

The rights sought in this application are for:

<b>The rights included in the 17th SA</b>	<b>Days</b>	<b>Additional Firm Right Required</b>	<b>Specific locations identified in ORR's Letter of 25 April 2025</b>
HF03 Manchester Piccadilly to London Euston	M-F (Am Peak)	Plus 1	West Coast Main Line Euston-Nuneaton
HF02 Chester to Euston	M-F	Plus 1	West Coast Main Line Euston-Nuneaton
HF04 Liverpool Lime Street to London Euston via Coventry	SUN	Plus 1	West Coast Main Line Euston-Nuneaton Birmingham Area
HF01 Wolverhampton to London Euston	SUN	Minus 1	West Coast Main Line Euston – Nuneaton Birmingham Area
HF02 Holyhead to London Euston	SUN	Plus 1	West Coast Main Line Euston - Nuneaton
HF02 Holyhead to Crewe	SUN	Minus 1	

Table 1: Details of rights sought in this application.

Although FTWCL are requesting one additional Sunday right between Liverpool Lime Street and London Euston, the amendment to the timetable is between Liverpool Lime Street and Birmingham New Street with an existing Wolverhampton to Euston service being amended to start at Liverpool Lime Street. Therefore, there is no additional quantum of service between Birmingham New Street and London Euston on a Sunday as part of this application and FTWCL are also relinquishing a Wolverhampton to London Euston right. In addition, Network Rail considers it is likely that FTWCRL would withdraw the relinquishment of the Wolverhampton to London Euston right should the Liverpool Lime Street to London Euston right not be approved, as such it is unlikely to release any capacity between Birmingham New

Street and London Euston if NR was not to support the changes in relation to this timetable change.

Network Rail can confirm its partial support of the access rights being requested in this application as listed in the table above in table 1 above. Network Rail can confirm that we do support:

- One firm right from Manchester Piccadilly to London Euston on weekdays within service group HF03 in Table 2.1 of Schedule 5
- One firm right from Liverpool Lime Street to London Euston (via Coventry) on a Sunday within service group HF04 in Table 2.1 of Schedule 5
- Relinquishment of one firm right between Wolverhampton and London Euston on a Sunday, a reduction in quantum of one, from seven down to six, Firm rights within service group HF02 in Table 4.1 of Schedule 5.

### **Congested Infrastructure**

The section on ‘Congested Infrastructure’ in NR’s General Representation letter dated 25 April 2025 is relevant to this application.

With effect from 11th May 2020, NR declared the infrastructure on the WCML South fast lines between Camden South Junction and Ledburn Junction as congested infrastructure.

This declaration was made under the Railways (Access, Management and Licensing of Railway Undertakings) Regulations 2016, regulation 26 (2) because, following consideration of access requests received, NR considered that this element of the infrastructure would be likely to become congested during the December 2020 timetable period. Consequently, NR initiated a WCML Industry Planning Group (‘IPG’) in May 2020 which was tasked with considering options for generating additional capacity and improved performance.

The IPG reported in January 2021 that a restructure of the WCML timetable could provide additional capacity and improved performance. The IPG therefore then initiated a second phase of work to develop and evaluate options for a restructured timetable, which was ultimately delivered under the governance of the Event Steering Group (‘ESG’) in December 2022.

On 9 July 2024, NR issued “Early Indicator of Likely Congestion” notices in relation to the following sections of the Northwest & Central network:

- Acton Lane feeding area (Bushey)
- Washwood Heath / Willenhall feeding area
- Crewe / Weaver feeding area

These Early Warning Indicator notices related to the impact of capability constraints on known or likely applications for electric traction capacity. Having recently updated the power supply modelling as part of this workstream, NR still has concerns in the areas highlighted above.

As demonstrated in our representation of 07 February 2025, NR will not be able to accommodate all applications seeking capacity on the WCML Fast Lines for the December 2025 timetable and beyond. As the declaration of congested infrastructure made in May 2020 remains active, NR will not be reissuing a further declaration of congested infrastructure.

## **Assurance / Assessments / Updates**

The following section will address specific areas of consideration and risk relevant to the application.

The Network Rail position (previously expressed both during and following the December 2022 ESG) is that the clear performance delta between the sensitivity test outputs (both T-1 and T-3 metrics), and the specific risks highlighted for the Up Fast Line (between Rugby and London Euston) indicates that the quantum of Fast Line services contained in the December 2022 Concept Train Plan (an output of the ESG) had reached a critical threshold level in terms of manageable capacity utilisation, beyond which the introduction of any further services was likely to trigger a notable compromise to network performance through increased reactionary delay.

## **Capacity**

As stated in our WCML representations letter 25 April 2025, NR currently does not support any additional quantum access rights on WCML South Fast Lines, with the exception of:

- the Manchester Piccadilly to London Euston weekday right sought within this application which is currently operating in the timetable under contingent rights (interim approach) and if not granted would be required to run as ECS for rolling stock balancing purposes, and using capacity, regardless.
- The Liverpool Lime Street to London Euston Sunday right sought within the application, subject to the Wolverhampton to London Euston Sunday right being relinquished, as it has no material impact on capacity on WCML South.

The 0700 Manchester-London Euston service, aligned to a right in this application, has been running under Contingent Rights since the December 2024 timetable change. It is Network Rail's understanding that FTWCRL would still require a long distance ECS move from Manchester to London Euston for stock balancing purposes if a right for this service were not to be granted, and therefore they would still require capacity within the timetable for that purpose, which Network Rail understand to be a similar path from Longsight depot (just outside Manchester) to London Euston. In addition, if ORR was to grant access rights to another operator to utilise capacity, that service would not operate as a standalone service and would likely require ancillary moves, consequently utilising more capacity than Network Rail is supportive of.

Please note that the 0700 Manchester-Euston as a passenger service, would be subject to continued inclusion in train performance regimes, is a key business service for FTWCRL alongside other morning peak services into Euston, and forms part of a wider diagram of service throughout the operating day. The application for this one service cannot therefore be directly compared to other competing applications, as it is one service linked by stock and traincrew diagrams to other services with rights, rather than a new service application seeking to use that capacity in association with other new services. It is also the case that this path is timed for Class 390 Pendolino exploiting Enhanced Permissible Speeds (EPS) on WCML, and if retimed for other types of rolling stock not able to exploit EPS, may not fit within the timetable structure without requiring wider intervention.

Following additional assessment, it is Network Rail's position that in addition to the Manchester to Euston right, the Liverpool Lime Street to London Euston right for a Sunday can also be supported providing the Wolverhampton to London Euston Sunday right is relinquished. No additional capacity is required between Birmingham and London Euston as a result of this right as were the Liverpool Lime Street to London Euston right not awarded, FTWCL would require retention of the Wolverhampton to Liverpool Sunday right. Timetable capacity is

available for the extension between Liverpool Lime Street and Birmingham New Street.

The rationale is that this will provide some resilience for diversionary route knowledge for FTWCRL Liverpool-based crew via Birmingham which currently does not have any regular paths and it operates before any West Midlands Trains service on a Sunday between Liverpool and Birmingham therefore consistent for quantum in the 09:xx hour which is currently not served.

Although these two services could be supported, analysis has identified limited timetable capacity on the West Coast Main Line South Fast Lines. From around 13:00 on a Sunday the structure of the West Coast Mainline South returns to the weekday pattern. Prior to 12:00 the timetable is planned exclusively on the slow lines due to the Sunday morning Section 4 Engineering access which is utilised on a weekly basis with possessions taken each week.

In this weekday pattern some of the xx:20/36 departures and xx:59 arrival slots present in the standard weekday hour are also available on a Sunday. Timetable capacity analysis has been completed for the geography between Rugby and London Euston only, capacity cannot be assumed for end-to-end paths. Between 13:00 and 21:00 on a Sunday there are 7 theoretical paths in the up and 8 in the down direction between Rugby and London Euston only.

For this application alone, there would be timetable capacity to accommodate the services against other rights Network Rail is supportive of, however Network Rail is not supportive of any rights which would utilise this theoretical capacity, as per the position outlined in the WCML General Representation of the 7 February and 25 April 2025 and in final representation letters specific to each relevant application.

This theoretical timetable capacity identified, between Rugby and London Euston, would also be relevant to any other Section 17 and Section 22A applying for rights which utilise the West Coast Main Line South Fast Lines. There is not enough timetable capacity available to accommodate all Section 17 and 22A aspirations on the West Coast Main Line South Fast Lines.

Although NR has identified some potential theoretical capacity on a Sunday for a very small number of paths, timetable capacity is only one element of the assurance process and NR is not supportive of any rights which would utilise this theoretical capacity, as per the position outlined in the WCML General Representations dated 07 February and 25 April 2025.

Current performance metrics included in the WCML Representation letters demonstrated that performance is currently not meeting expectations and is expected to decline further once all services, which currently hold access rights, are running. Those rights of the FTWCRL Track Access Contract to commence from the December 2025 timetable and are for services between Liverpool and London Euston and from London Euston to Stirling (First Rail Stirling Limited).

There is not enough timetable capacity available to accommodate all Section 17 and 22A aspirations on the West Coast Main Line South Fast Lines. NR is therefore not supportive of any other additional rights on the WCML South seeking to utilise additional capacity on the fast lines, including the additional Holyhead to London Euston Sunday right.

### **Complex and Competing Applications**

Through the complex and competing applications workstream, there are interactions between the FTWCRL 17th SA weekday and Sunday aspirations and multiple services aligned to the below applications.



Freightliner Limited (FLIM) 26th SA  
 East Coast Trains Limited (Lumo North West) Section 17  
 Virgin Management Limited Section 17  
 Wrexham, Shropshire & Midlands Railway (WSMR) Company Limited Section 17 Application.

NR has provided its final representations on the FLIM 26th SA (11 April 2025) and Lumo North West Section 17, WSMR and Virgin Management Limited Section 17 (09 May 2025) and is unsupportive of the rights in those applications. Conflicts were also present with the Freightliner Heavy Haul Limited (FLHH) 28th SA but this application has since been withdrawn.

If ORR were to direct this application in full it could impact on the ability to accommodate other rights on the WCML, which Network Rail may be supporting in its final representations of applications.

## **Performance**

In this section, a general update will be given, followed by specific information about the following:

- FTWCRL performance
- Birmingham performance review

In our General Representation letter dated 25 April 2025 we stated that “For the benefit of passengers and freight users, it is NR’s view that Operational performance across all operators on WCML South needs to both recover to, and be sustained at, a higher level than current performance before additional train services, which don’t have rights, are considered for inclusion into the timetable.”

Our performance information and concerns on the West Coast Main Line (WCML) South Fast Lines have been outlined in our two letters of representation, dated 07 February 2025 (‘Timetable Performance’ section and Appendix C) and 25 April 2025 (London Euston to Rugby section).

We have specifically set out the importance of having a timetable that is resilient, and factors that underpin a resilient timetable plan including firebreaks at key conflict points to prevent spread of delay from service group to service group, are of key importance. Any additional services introduced on the West Coast South Fast Lines would further increase the number of services planned on minimum headway, reducing the number of firebreaks in the timetable and the ability to withstand typical variations in train presentation without significant spread of delay between services and across service groups.

Current performance metrics demonstrate that performance is not currently meeting expectations and is expected to decline further once all services which currently hold access rights, are running (as explained in our representation dated 07 February 2025). NR believes any additional services on the Fast Lines on the WCML South would have a significant detrimental impact to performance where the current quantum of services, combined with the realities of operating a mixed traffic railway, already have significant performance challenges and contribute to delivering performance at a level below expected levels.

## **FTWCRL Performance**

FTWCRL punctuality within the confines of West Coast South has been regressing since May 2017. This can be further demonstrated when the COVID ‘bounce-back’ is removed from the data as well as the subsequent timetable changes that saw a reduced service offered up to December 2022. Above threshold congestion on the WCML is also increasing in the Up

Direction.

The West Coast Mainline is a highly utilised section of track which is susceptible to congestion and reactionary delays - (i.e., when a delay event of more than 3 minutes is caused to the train behind, because the train in front is in the booked path of that train). Even with the current firebreaks available, there is a lack of resilience within the timetable to aid recovery. In practise, during normal operations the firebreaks are eroded, and the perturbation of lateness perpetuates across Route boundaries. Performance analysis conducted by NR has shown the importance of ample recovery being available to absorb sub threshold delays before locations where there are multiple services tightly flighted.

The current Operating Plan is not performing to a consistently high level, and recovery from incidents are taking longer to recover due to the successive flighting of trains on the WCML Fast Lines.

Current performance of this section sees a T-3 of 71.5% which is significantly below the overall NW&C position of 82.5%. The image below shows the on time performance for the last 5 years and the Sunday performance on the Liverpool route over the last 5 years.

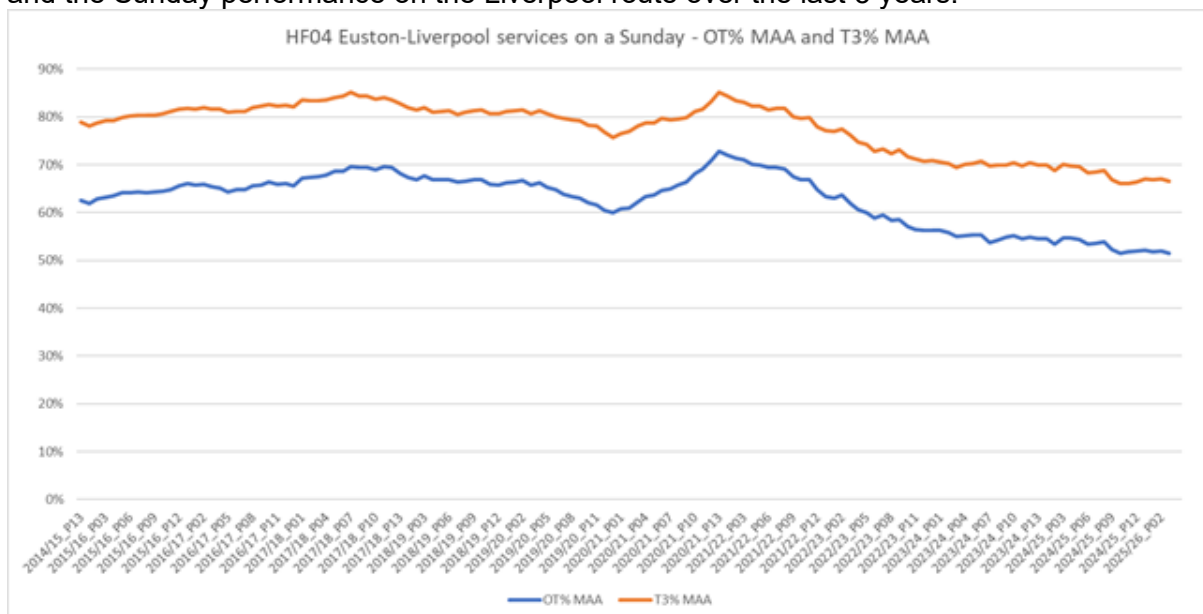


Figure 1: Graph showing On-Time and Time – 3 Moving Annual Average for the HF04 London Euston –Liverpool Lime Street service group on a Sunday.

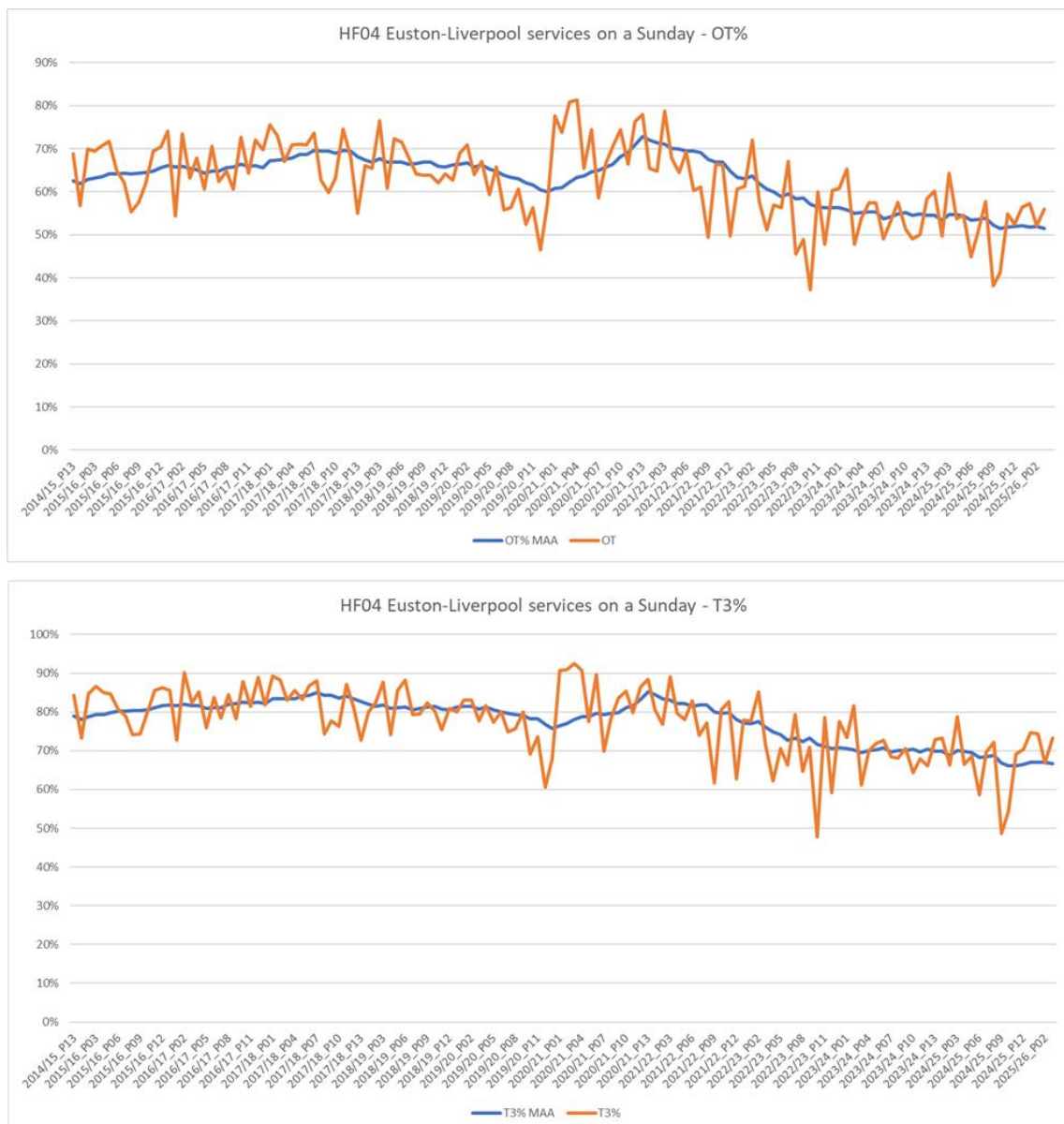


Figure 2: Graphs showing On-time & Time – 3 performance of service group HF04 London Euston to Liverpool Lime Street on a Sunday.

Infrastructure investment in the Manchester Area is planned through Manchester Northwest Transformation Programme (MNTP) to support improving the performance outcome.

The 0700 Manchester Piccadilly-London Euston service, aligned to a right in this application, has been running under Contingent Rights since the December 2024 timetable change. Network Rail note FTWCRL's statement in the Form P that a positioning move will be required to facilitate their stock strategy even if they do not obtain a right to operate a passenger service. Operating such a positioning move as an ECS may present a risk to overall punctuality due to the way class 5 trains are regulated in the operation. Further, the service would operate as a cl390 which is able to take advantage of EPS timings.

NR note that observed punctuality at destination for this service is 38% within 3 minutes (against a total service group current T-3 MAA of 54%) and 82% within 15 minutes (against a total service group current T-15 MAA of 86%). The reasons for punctuality loss across the London Euston-Manchester Piccadilly route are varied across time and geography, and

Network Rail have been working, and are continuing to work, collaboratively and at pace with FTWCRL to diagnose and deliver sustainable performance improvements to the entire London Euston-Manchester Piccadilly service group.

### Birmingham Performance Review

In the December 2023 Timetable Performance at Birmingham New Street (BHM) was below the national On Time WTT performance, 65.2% nationally compared to 46.9% at BHM. Performance at Birmingham New Street had an On Time performance of 46.9% overall and FTWCRL had an On Time of 38.4%.

Comparably, in the June 2024 Timetable Performance BHM is below the national On Time WTT performance, 61.9% nationally compared to 42.9% at BHM. FTWCRL had an On Time of 36.6%.

Performance at BHM, by hour, in December 2023 dropped during 05:00-08:59 from 76.7% to 38% On Time WTT%. Similarly in June 2024, BHM performance by hour deteriorates during 05:00-08:59, from 73% to 37.5%.

In summary, recent timetables at BHM show performance declining during the morning peak with a slight recovery during the days off peak and drops again during the evening peak then gradually improves post evening peak from 2000.

The rights Network Rail is supportive of in this application result in FTWCRL's quantum through Birmingham remaining consistent with the current position. Therefore, limited impact is expected on performance in the Birmingham area as a result of these rights.

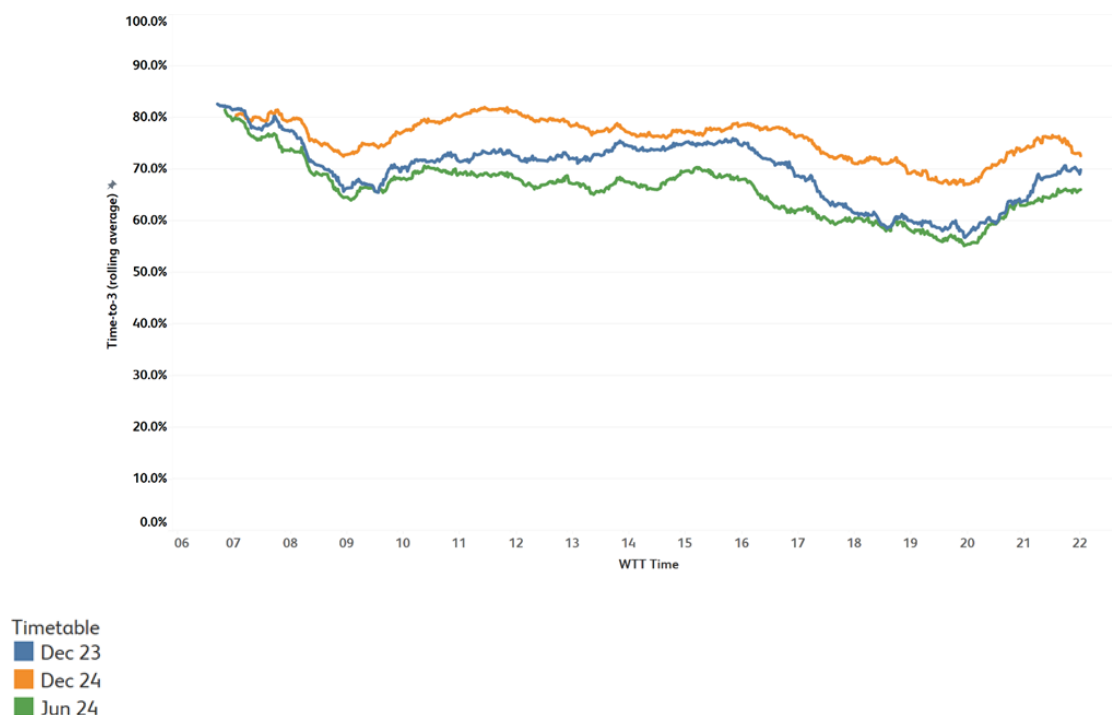


Figure 3: Graphs showing Time – 3 rolling average for December 2023, 2024 and June 2024.

## **HS2**

Some of the access rights sought via these applications will interact with DfT and industry proposals, developed with West Coast Partnership Development ('WCPD') for HS2 operation. Specifically, any rights where the services will continue north on the WCML after Rugby heading towards Stafford.

A captive service between Old Oak Common and Curzon Street (Birmingham) is planned to commence in the early 2030s. The current expectation is that HS2 services will then shortly afterwards begin running on the existing WCML – to a combination of Manchester, Glasgow and Liverpool, joining the WCML at Handsacre Junction (near Lichfield). Some existing long-distance services will be withdrawn at this point, with replacement services added between London Euston and Birmingham New Street/Lichfield to better serve intermediate markets by making use of the capacity released.

A further section of the HS2 route (from Old Oak Common to Euston) will – subject to funding – be opened later in the 2030s, at which point the full HS2 Phase 1 infrastructure will be in place. That will trigger another change to the WCML timetable as more services can be withdrawn from the WCML south of Handsacre and re-directed to/from London via HS2. Train service specifications for these three stages are in development, decisions about which will be based on ongoing work between HS2 Ltd and WCPD. No part of the current HS2 programme scope delivers additional capacity north of Handsacre Junction, and it will therefore be necessary to reduce the current train service by approximately one path for every HS2 path introduced.

### **Power Supply Modelling related to WCML aspirations**

NR has undertaken a comprehensive power supply modelling exercise to assess the impact of accommodating all outstanding access proposals for additional electric services against the rights already held by operators (both passenger and freight), on the network's traction power supply capability.

In its power modelling, NR has attempted to maximise the capability of the network by assessing a realistic timetable which considers aspirations as well as a timetable running under normal operations today and in the expected future timetable (December 2025).

We have modelled a quantum of operations and traction reflective of the actual operational position. This means that the timetable modelled does not reflect the worst-case scenario should operators choose to exercise their full existing rights to operate at longer lengths or in electric (instead of diesel).

By coupling these modelling results with industry-agreed operational controls and mitigations (including restrictions to operating lengths and arrangements with operators to "notch back" through the areas of concern), three areas of concern remain:

- Washwood Heath (evening peak)
- Crewe and Weaver (peaks throughout the day)
- Willenhall

Network Rail does not have any power supply concerns for the paths aligned to these particular rights Network Rail is supportive of. However, Network Rail has already been working with FTWCRL to alleviate its power supply concerns in the Crewe-Weaver area. Network Rail has been unable to accommodate 4 Liverpool Lime Street to London Euston paths using electric traction in the timetable (which already hold contingent rights).

## **Conclusion**

In this representation letter we have confirmed that we partly support the access rights sought in this application commencing from December 2025 Timetable.

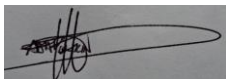
Network Rail believes any additional services on the fast lines on the WCML South would have a significant detrimental impact to performance where the current quantum of services, combined with the realities of operating a mixed traffic railway, already have significant performance challenges and contribute to delivering performance at a level below expected levels.

However, for the reasons outlined in this letter, Network Rail is willing to support One weekday Manchester Piccadilly to London Euston right, one Sunday Liverpool Lime Street to London Euston, and the relinquishment of one Sunday Wolverhampton to London Euston right.

NR considers that this final representation letter, plus the two WCML general representations dated 07 February 2025 and 25 April 2025 contain sufficient information on this application to enable ORR to make a decision.

Should ORR choose to direct this application, we would like the opportunity to review any finalised Supplemental Agreement including Schedule 5 table drafting before ORR directs.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Omowunmi Toby', is written over a grey rectangular background.

Omowunmi Toby

Franchise and Access Manager

## **ANNEXES**

### **Annex A – Interacting Locations Matrix**