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Dear Paul

East Coast Main Line - Pathing Requirements

Our train planning teams attended a meeting on 20th August 2008 regarding the development of the East Coast timetable in light of various applications by passenger operators for new services on the route. We also had a meeting on 27th August with the Office of Rail Regulation to explain what services are required now and in the future on the East Coast Main Line (ECML).

The purpose of this letter is to detail our requirements on the various sections of the East Coast Main Line.

We are pleased that we have been given the opportunity to input into the timetable development and strategy for this route.

We are aware that the recently published ECML Route Utilisation Strategy (RUS), deals with a longer term strategy, post enhancements on the route but does not present a deliverable strategy for increased services prior to any enhancements.

We are aware that Network Rail are trying to develop a timetable that allows 6 long distance passenger services plus 1 freight service per hour. The concept of 1 freight path an hour has not been agreed with the freight industry and we are concerned that future growth forecasts of freight flows are not being fully taken into account in the timetable development.

The ECML RUS forecasts require 6 long distance passenger services plus 2 freight services per hour. It assumes that this is only deliverable post the Joint Line upgrade. Whilst the funding for the Joint Line is included within the Office of Rail Regulation's (ORR) draft determinations for Control Period 4(CP4), we are currently unaware of any timescales for the completion of the work. There are also many unresolved issues with regard to the Joint Line including journey times and pathways onto the Joint Line at Werrington Junction and the commercial impact the longer route has on freight operators. It would be helpful if Network Rail could provide an update on the Joint Line.

We have several concerns regarding the timetable:

Historically freight paths have been put in at random due to the non standard passenger timetable. In moving to a standard hourly timetable, these times may not match up, and in some

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hours currently there is more than 1 path. We ask Network Rail demonstrate that existing, established paths can still run in line with Firm Rights held throughout their whole route, not just on the East Coast Main Line.

The first draft of the timetable indicated extended journey times for freight services because they are looped more frequently than at present. The standard proposed path takes 3 ½ hours to get from Doncaster to Peterborough, some 80 miles. This is wholly unacceptable and will obviously impact end to end journey times making them commercially unviable.

Whilst there are merits in moving to a standard pattern timetable, it has to be recognised that there is a mixture of class 4 paths (between 1200t and 1600t) and class 6 paths (between 2000t and 3000t) needed on the route. The characteristics of these types of trains are quite different and can not necessarily be accommodated in the same pathing. As well as accommodating existing services, remaining capacity to allow for growth must also take into account the need for both class 4 and class 6 freight services of varying weight. The standard proposed path has assumed all freight is 1400t, including existing services, that clearly is not acceptable.

Currently NR have stated that they can only path a class 6 in the hour that there is no class 4 and only when the xx10 [from Kings X] passenger train goes to Lincoln. This appears to be extremely inflexible and we are concerned that this will exclude growth of class 6 traffic during the day, which includes Network Rail's own infrastructure services, particularly to and from Tallington and Whitemoor.

From Peterborough to Doncaster we suggest an alternative interim strategy of a 2 hour timetable which would allow for 3 freight paths every 2 hours.

It should be noted however that freight demand on the ECML varies throughout the route and to specify requirements for freight in such a simplified manner does not reflect the mix of traffic joining and leaving the route.

In terms of freight on the ECML the line divides into 5 clear sections. The freight requirements for each section are listed below:

London to Peterborough (via Hertford Loop)

Now: there is currently a mixture of class 4 intermodal trains and class 6 aggregate, building materials and infrastructure services on this route.

Future: The opening of the new port at London Gateway in 2011 will result in a requirement for new class 4 paths to the various terminals in the north east; the forecast on this route is 5-6 trains a day each way by 2015 and up to 10 trains a day each way by 2025. We also understand that work on the new terminal at Alconbury begins later this year and we are aware of planning conditions at this site requiring considerable use of rail. In addition continued growth in the aggregates and building materials sector is expected with this part of the ECML serving trains from the Peak District and Leicestershire to East Anglia, Hertfordshire and East London (this will be particularly important if capacity on the Midland Main Line is constrained). We suggest that 1 class 4 freight path an hour plus 1 other freight path every other hour that could be used by either class 4 or class 6 trains per hour should be sufficient until 2013. This may enable alternative hours of 6 and 5 high speed passenger trains an hour.

Peterborough to Doncaster

Now: there is currently a mixture of class 4 intermodal trains and class 6 aggregate, building materials and infrastructure services on this route. This part of the route is also used by container traffic from Felixstowe to the north east terminals and aggregates and building materials from the north to East Anglia/Hertfordshire.

Future: The 27th rail path from Felixstowe is currently being bid for and the destination is not yet known. Felixstowe Port has planning permission to expand and it is expected that rail terminal capacity and the Felixstowe branch line doubling and gauge clearance will be completed by 2013, we expect at this point that there will be a surge in demand from Felixstowe resulting in approximately 12 intermodal trains a day each way from Felixstowe, on top of the forecast from

London Gateway and Alconbury.

We note there are future plans during CP4 to upgrade the Joint Line which could enable future freight growth but there is as yet no committed date for this work to be completed. We note that the move from the Down Slow at Peterborough station to the Joint Line involves crossing all 4 lines to reach the Joint Line down Spalding at Werrington Junction and the capacity implications of this are as yet unknown. Currently we do not know the journey time implications via this route but this route would only be acceptable if existing journey times can be maintained. In addition Freightliner is concerned that the Joint Line route is 20 miles further, which has cost and therefore competition with road implications. Once the timescales and details are resolved there may be further opportunity for changes in passenger operator timetables but these benefits can not be assumed in the consideration of the current track access applications.

As an interim position until the completion of the Joint Line works and resolution of issues on this route We suggest that 1 class 4 freight path an hour plus 1 other freight path every other hour that could be used by either class 4 or class 6 trains per hour should be sufficient until 2013. This could perhaps be modelled with alternative hours of 6 and 5 high speed passenger trains an hour.

Doncaster to Hambleton Junction

Now This section is dominated by the coal services from Immingham joining at Joan Croft Junction until Hambleton Junction on route to the Aire Valley power stations, coal crossing the ECML at Doncaster from South Yorkshire and Hull, also steel traffic from Scunthorpe to Lackenby and some class 4 intermodal traffic.

Future Existing traffic to continue with some future capacity for growth to be available. The pattern of services here is complex and this needs to be taken into account but at least 2 paths an hour, at least one of which could be class 4 is required on this section. Shaftholme Junction flyover is now funded in CP4 and this will enable traffic from Immingham to the Aire Valley to be ECML free. However until the date of completion is known, this enhancement can not be assumed.

Colton Junction northwards

Now This section is dominated by the coal services from Scotland and north east ports on route to the Aire Valley and Trent Valley power stations and steel traffic from Scunthorpe to Lackenby, with some traffic joining at Northallerton. There is also some class 4 intermodal traffic. The section between Newcastle and Tursdale Junction is a 2 track section and the flighting of high speed passenger services and class 6 freight services is particularly important on this section.

Future Existing traffic to continue with some future capacity for growth to be available. Both the ports at Tees and Tyne have ambitions to increase their market in containerised goods. At least 2 freight paths an hour, at least one of which could be class 4 is required on this section.

Doncaster to Hare Park Jct

Now : Container traffic to Leeds and Wakefield plus coal, oil, steel, waste and other

Future Existing traffic to continue with capacity for growth particularly for container services. At least 2 freight paths an hour, at least one of which could be class 4 is required on this section.

We look forward to continuing to work with Network Rail to find the optimal solution on this route. Please contact myself if you would like to discuss any of the above.

Yours sincerely

Lindsay Durham
Head of Rail Strategy
Freightliner Group Limited