

Brian Hopkinson
Track Access Executive
Office of Rail Regulation
1 Kemble Street

LONDON EC2B 4AN
brian.hopkinson@orr.gsi.gov.uk

Mark Leving

Managing Director

☎: 01904 525221

✉ mark.leving@firstgroup.com

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Dear Brian,

ECML Timetable

Further to your email of 29th September inviting comments on Network Rail's ECML capacity report, Hull Trains makes the following comments and observations.

1. We believe the piece of work is fundamentally competent and reflects genuine capability of the route. We also believe that the improved timetable construction, flighting of trains and more structured intermediate calling patterns provides the basis for a timetable which has the potential to perform at a higher level of punctuality than at present. Yesterday for example, we experienced one service arriving 33 minutes late at King's Cross entirely as a consequence of reactionary delays following other LDHS services with different calling patterns Doncaster-King's Cross.

2. We are concerned that Network Rail appear not to have addressed the question of capacity available immediately, which we know to be possible as validated paths exist for our Harrogate proposals.

3. We believe that further work is needed to validate symmetrical paths off the main line, because this will be critical in the ability to provide adequate terminal turnrounds and efficient rolling stock utilisation. This is not currently the case as Hull Trains turnrounds at Hull appear to be either approximately 6 minutes or 126 minutes, neither of which is remotely acceptable. We expect further detailed work is essential to ensure turnrounds at Hull & King's Cross of around 20-50 minutes can be delivered. Improvement in line speeds and signalling between Templehirst, Selby and Hull and more flexible signalling arrangements at Selby may provide a partial solution to this.

4. In respect of aspirational additional freight capacity, we would expect provision to be made on the basis of realistic forecasts which use both current actual levels and recent growth or contraction as their basis. We note one recent proposal which infers a requirement to provide for growth exceeding 500%. We do not consider this to be remotely credible or realistic. We also note that the comments exclude reference to proposed investment for significantly enhanced freight on the route between Werrington Jn. and Loversall via Lincoln.

5. We note that passenger operators have been required to invest in rolling stock capable of matching minimum performance and maximum speed criteria so as to optimise the utilisation of capacity. We would propose that freight operators could be encouraged to similarly utilise better performing rolling stock in order to facilitate the pathing of freight trains.

Yours sincerely



Mark Leving
Managing Director