

PAPER TO NATIONAL TASK FORCE

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Title: Efficient Engineering Access

Author: Jim Morgan

Sponsor: Jim Morgan

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Introduction

This is the second report to NTF on progress with Efficient Engineering Access and will be the final one before the work is taken forward by the Network RUS: Efficient Operational Practice and Network Availability group.

Background

The Steering Group started work in the second half of 2005 following an ORR seminar where a number of operators were very critical of the current policy. At the steering group and its three working groups, both passenger and freight operators were encouraging Network Rail to offer longer access particularly at weekends and examining in detail all the issues involved.

Network Rail was developing a number of efficiency initiatives in the area of track renewals and possessions management and announced at an ORR seminar in October 2006 the concept of the seven-day railway. This brought together these and other initiatives to offer train operators on main routes a full capacity railway and a half capacity railway, for a limited period of about 6 hours overnight and 8 hours at weekends. It followed some work on WCML funded by DfT which demonstrated the business case for this.

The Proposed Way Forward

The half-capacity railway will be delivered through two track operation on four track routes and single line working over two track routes. Where single line working is involved the capacity may well be less than half the two track capacity but in general this should be adequate for the traffic proposed.

Some train operators have not greeted these proposals with the credit they deserve, focussing to a great extent on the problems such as single line working capacity etc., it is accepted that more work needs to be done, but the level of concern expressed by operators is not deserved.

Further work that needs to be done:

- Validation of where the 7-day railway concept should apply. Where is there an industry business case? This will involve supplying passenger count data to Network Rail for relevant times as well as commissioning some research about the potential value of the total market. It is expected that the best industry case will be for shorter possessions on Intercity and regional routes but possibly a different situation on local services into large centres;
- Detailed work on a route by route basis to confirm the best possessions pattern;
- Detailed work on a route by route basis to confirm infrastructure works needed to enable delivery;
- Translation into Rules of the Route.

Possession KPIs

A separate workstream has been developing a number of KPIs to measure the success of Efficient Engineering Access. These have not yet been finalised by Network Rail, so ORR have tendered some work for consultants to review the industry proposals for Network Availability weightings. SDG have been appointed and are tasked with producing a paper assessing the relative merits of the possible metrics by August 2007, an outline specification for Network Rail's Information Systems department by September, and a final report in October 2007. This will be presented at an industry seminar at a date to be confirmed.

Next Step

NTF are asked to note this paper which should be read in conjunction with Richard O'Brien's presentation to the last NTF.

This work will become part of Network Rail's day job but overseen by the Network RUS: Efficient Operational Practice and Network Availability group.

Jim Morgan
Chairman of Efficient Engineering Access Steering Group