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Dear Brian

Proposed Hull Trains Track Access Contract: Harrogate – Kings Cross

Northern operates franchised passenger services between York, Knaresborough, Harrogate and Leeds, and is the only franchised passenger operator on the route between York and Harrogate. The local services provided have evolved over time to exploit the available resources and existing route infrastructure to meet the travel demands of the local communities on the route and provide links to the urban centres of Leeds and York for employment, study, shopping and recreation. Recent investment by Yorkshire Forward and WYPTE in additional vehicles has resulted in the introduction of longer trains operating on the entire route between York and Leeds via Harrogate to accommodate significant growth in peak patronage into and out of Leeds.

The route section between York and Harrogate is twenty miles long, with 13 miles of single track including a short section at Skelton junction and a further section between Poppleton and Knaresborough with a short intermediate two-track section between Hammerton and Cattal that can be used for passing trains.

The services over the section between York and Knaresborough are less frequent than between Knaresborough, Harrogate and Leeds reflecting the lower capacity of the single line sections between York and Knaresborough and a higher passenger demand for travel to/from Leeds.

The introduction of long distance services between Harrogate and Kings Cross via York will undoubtedly bring benefits for passengers living adjacent to the route and avoid the need to change trains at York, off-set by the relatively low number of services. Northern's concern is that it will be exposed to several significant risks:

1. The Northern operation on the end-to-end route between York and Leeds via Harrogate is currently self-contained and achieves an 83.16% PPM. The Knaresborough – Leeds services avoid the ECML interaction at York and the single line sections between York and Knaresborough

and achieve a much better 91.33% PPM. The introduction of services to/from Kings Cross via the ECML where the current PPM is below both these values suggests that delay will be imported from the ECML to the local services between York and Harrogate where the single line sections already reduce the ability to recover from delay impacts. Northern would expect robust contingency arrangements to be in place to limit the transfer of delay from the ECML to the local services and to limit the transmission of this delay throughout the entire route and to protect the delivery of peak capacity into and out of Leeds

2. The single line sections between York and Harrogate make the construction of resource efficient timetables more difficult to achieve and any structural changes to the peak timetables to flex Northern to create capacity for Hull Trains will result in a loss of resource productivity at a time when Northern is experiencing high load factors during the peak periods. Any loss of peak resource productivity will result in a failure to deliver HLOS outputs in CP4.
3. Northern already experiences a shortage of overnight stabling capacity at Harrogate and as a result Northern is forced to stable units at York and Leeds, which would be stabled at Harrogate if sufficient capacity was available. The delivery of sufficient capacity to match HLOS growth forecasts will result in longer trains operating on this route and this will increase the requirement for optimally sited stabling capacity at Harrogate where trains start and finish, and avoid unnecessary empty running to/from Leeds and/or York. Northern has been unable to secure Network Rail's agreement to fund the refurbishment of existing unusable facilities at Harrogate and would not wish to see the provision of additional stabling capacity, triggered by Hull Trains' requirements, being created without delivering Northern's longstanding aspirations for increased stabling capacity, or being created in such a way that would result in a higher cost to Network Rail (and ultimately DfT) for the future provision of stabling to accommodate HLOS forecast growth.

The proposed Hull Trains calling pattern at all stations between York and Harrogate, will expose Northern to significant levels of revenue abstraction between Harrogate and York, including journeys made between intermediate stations. The potential loss of the existing regular Northern Rail service patterns, caused by the flexing required to accommodate Hull Trains, will also have a financial impact.

In the absence of a draft timetable, it is not possible to model the potential impact on Northern's revenue using the industry models. Northern receives substantial franchise payments to operate services between York and Leeds from DfT and WYPTE, and any revenue abstraction will have a financial impact on both DfT and Northern. Northern requests that if paths are created that are acceptable to Hull Trains, ORR only approves rights for Hull Trains to start from Harrogate and call at intermediate stations between Harrogate York to "pick up passengers for south of York only"; and in the opposite direction to call at York, at intermediate stations and at Harrogate to "set

down passengers from south of York only", to minimise the impact of this revenue loss.

The absence of a detailed timetable at this stage makes the evaluation and quantification of these risks difficult and Northern would welcome an opportunity to make further more detailed comments once a draft timetable is available.

Northern is SFO at Harrogate and the other five calling points between Harrogate and York where the current car-parking situation will have to be reviewed to create the necessary passenger access to the proposed long distance services.

This response is not confidential. Please let me know if you require any clarification of these issues.

Yours sincerely

Niel Wilson
Track Access Manager