

Robert Holder  
Network Access Manager  
Great Western Railway  
1 Milford Street  
Swindon SN1 1HL

By email

Cc: Craig Tomlin; Rachel Gilliland; Georgina Collinge

16 December 2016

Dear Rob,

**Re: Proposed Track Access Contract between Alliance Rail Holdings and Network Rail Infrastructure Limited**

Thank you for your e-mail dated 14<sup>th</sup> December regarding Alliance's proposed service between Southampton and London Waterloo.

With regard to your point 1, Alliance has prepared evidence that the proposal exceeds the threshold for the generation to abstraction ratio that the ORR normally applies to open access applications. The relevant documentation and models have already been supplied to the ORR.

I was concerned to read your second point regarding congestion. Although we accept that the corridor from the east into Southampton – like many other parts of the network – is busy, we were not aware of any moves by Network Rail to declare the route congested. If there is any documentation relating to a formal proposal for this, please would you either send us a copy or indicate where we might find it. Whilst Network Rail has not yet agreed the capacity that we have identified, neither have they raised the specific issue of congestion. We expect that the ORR will seek Network Rail's views on this point when our application is submitted.

Alliance has not completed any formal analysis of capacity utilisation on the route. However, I have noticed that it is quite common for late-running freight trains to be accommodated between Basingstoke and Eastleigh or Southampton in the same hour that the two scheduled paths are both used. In one instance I found four freight trains on this section in one hour without any delay to passenger trains being incurred. This suggests there is some capacity available without compromising performance.

Whilst I accept that any additional train has a marginal impact on performance when trains are running out of course, I do not accept that the Grand Southern's London-bound trains will have a significant impact on GWR. GTR Southern's Victoria via Horsham train is scheduled to depart 7 minutes behind the Cardiff to Portsmouth train and has an additional call at Swanwick; it is much more likely this will have an impact on GWR's train in the event of late running.

You raise concerns about the impact of a proposed 0946 arrival at Southampton on GWR's 0940 arrival from Brighton (0942 departure to Great Malvern). However, this is 6 minutes ahead of the Grand Southern train, on a headway of 2 minutes. I note that the GWR train has 6 minutes pathing time between Fareham and Northam Jn, following the Portsmouth stopping service; it seems more likely that this service would impact the Great Malvern train. In any case, if the GWR train is late through Northam it is almost certain not to have a punctual departure from Southampton which would then delay – or be delayed by - one or more of the CrossCountry train to Bournemouth, the Romsey to Salisbury local service or the Waterloo to Weymouth. I do not see how the presence of Grand Southern's train would add significantly to the existing performance risk.

We have already identified an issue with the pathing of Grand Southern's 1836 arrival at Southampton. This is a peak path out of Waterloo that would not start operation until December 2018; we expect there to be some alteration to timings by then in order to release capacity out of Waterloo and this is likely to affect the arrival time at Southampton.

I am aware that platform capacity at Southampton is at a premium. Whilst a standard hour platform slot has been identified, you will be aware that just about every hour at Southampton includes off-pattern moves. We are continuing to work with Network Rail planners to identify all possible paths and that will include a detailed analysis of available platforms at Southampton Central.

Yours sincerely,



Chris Hanks

Head of Development

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