

GREATER MANCHESTER INTEGRATED TRANSPORT AUTHORITY**REPORT FOR INFORMATION**

COMMITTEE: Rail and Metrolink Network
DATE: 17 July 2009
SUBJECT: Planned Network Rail possessions
REPORT OF: Interim Service Delivery Director

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To inform Members of Network Rail's procedure for possessions of the railway network to undertake engineering work.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are recommended to note the contents of this report and receive updates on future possessions which affect the local rail network.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None

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PLANNED NETWORK RAIL POSSESSIONS

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 At a recent meeting of the former Transport Network Committee, Members requested an outline of Network Rail's procedure for possessions of the railway to undertake engineering works.
- 1.2 A possession is defined as any restriction of the network for Train Operators. This includes:-
 - Engineering work governed by the Network Rail Rule Book, including:
 - Trackwork
 - Electrical supply isolations
 - Signalling disconnections
 - Temporary speed restrictions
 - Operational telecommunications disconnections
- 1.3 The above work can require either the complete closure of a section of route, or the closure of only one or more running lines. On double track railways, when one line only is closed, and trains operate over the remaining line in both directions, this is referred to as 'single line working'.
- 1.4 Possessions of the track to undertake engineering work are initially determined by Network Rail through informal consultation with Train Operators and Network Rail Delivery Planners with the aim of achieving the optimal balance between access to the network for train operations and access for maintenance, renewal and enhancement work.
- 1.5 This is followed by formal consultation with Train Operators, in accordance with Access Conditions, leading to the issue by Network Rail of details of the possessions in an annual publication called 'the Final Rules of the Route' (Final ROTR), published every November.
- 1.6 Train Operators have a right of appeal against the contents of the Final ROTR.
- 1.7 The aim of consultation and appeal is to minimise the disruption to rail users. Whilst every effort is made to preserve the timetable, in the event of a conflict, in which Network Rail engineers feel that a Possession is unavoidable, then that decision takes precedence over Track Access Agreements with individual Train Operators' wishes.
- 1.8 The planning of Possessions starts some two years in advance of the main timetable change date (in December each year). Therefore, Network Rail infrastructure investment are currently working on the engineering access plan submissions for the December 2011 timetable

1.9 However, the ROTR will be published some 13 months before the timetable date. The timescales for the publication of the ROTR for any timetable are shown in Appendix A. However, they consist of four stages as follows :

- Version 1 (Preliminary Proposal) - 13 months before timetable date
- Version 2 (Final/Decision Document) – 10 months before timetable date. Referral to dispute panel should be against this document within 15 working days of receipt
- Version 3 (Preliminary Proposal for subsidiary period). 8 months before timetable date
- Version 4 (Final/Decision Document). 5 months before timetable date. Referral to dispute panel if necessary should be against this document within 15 working days of receipt

During this period operators can challenge, comment on, or object to the plans, but as the plan period elapses, many of the operators' issues will have been overcome.

2. Types of Possessions

2.1 Any possession that requires an alteration to a train schedule will be treated as Disruptive. However, some possessions may appear initially to be Non-Disruptive, but will, nonetheless be treated as Disruptive. For example:

- the closure of some platform lines at a major station when the totality of the train service cannot be accommodated in the remaining available platforms;
- Week night single line working where, due to the number of trains planned over the single line, the original train schedules may require further alteration.

2.2 The disruptive engineering access detailed in the ROTR is reviewed annually. The access only remains in the ROTR if the Network Rail engineering disciplines and delivery have the work volumes to support the possessions. If in that year there are no works that support the ROTR possessions the access is returned to the train operating companies to allow trains to operate.

2.3 Applications for Non-Disruptive Possessions must be made as soon as requirements are known and at least 6 weeks prior to the start of the relevant week. This process is also shown in Appendix A.

3. TRAIN OPERATOR CONSULTATION

3.1 Train Operator consultation comprises three stages, and runs parallel with the process of developing the Rules of the Route and finalising the Possession Plan. Those stages and their titles are as follows:

- *Period Possession Plan.* Every 4 weeks a detailed programme of proposed engineering works covering a 4-weekly period will be issued as a 'Draft Period Possession Plan' (DPPP). The DPPP is issued at least 28 weeks before the start of the 4 weeks concerned. This will contain details of all possessions.
- *Informed Traveller.* The DPPP will be followed by a 'Confirmed Period Possession Plan' (CPPP). The CPPP is issued 26 weeks prior to the start of the relevant 4-weekly period giving sufficient details of planned disruptive possessions to enable an assessment of train alterations to be made. In turn this enables train operators to begin to assess how they will deal with the disruption and keep the travelling public informed.
- *Trains Meetings.* In certain instances Network Rail may arrange a Trains Meeting for all affected Train Operators. This is most likely where a particular possession, or series of possessions, will result in significant train alterations. An obvious example within Greater Manchester will be possessions impacting on Piccadilly Station and the routes into it, all of which can impact on a number of operators. Trains meetings will be held to:
 - outline the likely disruptive effects
 - determine train alterations required
 - agree an outline train plan
- In addition to the above formal process, Network Rail will meet with any Train Operator, if requested to discuss any concerns they may have.

3.2 Again this process is outlined in Appendix A.

4. CHANGE PROCEDURE

4.1. Changes to Possessions given in the Rules of the Route are possible. These changes can arise from a re-assessment of engineering needs, or for other reasons.

4.2 Given the need to achieve 'Informed Traveller' deadlines, details of amended train services must be available 12 weeks before the date of operation. Consequently, wherever possible, Network Rail will consult with Train Operators regarding possessions and other capacity restrictions which are disruptive to agreed train paths in sufficient time to

allow details of those disruptive possessions to be included in a Confirmed Period Possessions Plan which will be published 26 weeks prior to the start of each 4-week period.

- 4.3 Where a need arises to amend ROTR in either the Draft or Confirmed Period Possession Plan to cater for urgent safety requirements or other emergency situations, all parties concerned will co-operate in accelerating the normal timescales in this Procedure commensurate with the urgency of the circumstances.

5. CONCLUSION

- 5.1 Members will appreciate that the railway industry has a complex, but flexible process for allowing train services to be disrupted to undertake essential engineering works.
- 5.2 Network Rail is under instruction from the DfT and Office of Rail Regulation to minimise disruption arising from engineering work and especially reduce disruption at weekends. This was outlined in the Network Rail Strategic Business Plan Update of April 2008 (“Move towards a 7 day railway”).
- 5.3 Members will be provided with future reports which highlight forthcoming significant engineering work on the local Greater Manchester rail network.

6. RECOMMENDATION

- 6.1 A recommendation appears at the front of this report.

Michael Renshaw
Interim Bus and Rail Director

Rules of the Route (ROTR) - a term which covers all the process of publication of possessions by Network Rail

THIS CHART SHOWS A TYPICAL YEAR RUNNING FROM May TO THE DECEMBER 31 MONTHS LATER

	Network Rail	Train Operators	GMPTE	Others
May 2010	Audit of rail lines			
May to October 2010		Informal discussions and workshops prior to issue of ROTR v.1		
October 2010	"Preliminary Proposal" (ROTR v.1) for December 2011 (all intended possessions listed up from Dec 2011 to Dec 2012).	Operators can comment/challenge within 1 month.		Any disputes would go to office of Rail Regulator.
November 2010	N. Rail renew/change their plans or proceed anyway.			
December 2010 January 2011	TIMETABLE CHANGE			
February 2011	"Final Decision" document (ROTR v.2) re. October 10 Preliminary Proposal (15 days for operators to appeal).	Operators can comment/challenge within 1 month.		
	N. Rail renew/change their plans or proceed anyway.			Any dispute would be referred to an internal N. Rail Dispute Panel, comprising representatives from Network Rail, Freight & Train Operators.
March 2011				
April 2011	Final (ROTR v.3) and "Preliminary Proposal" for any changes from May 2012 to December 2012.	Operators can comment/challenge within 1 month.		Any dispute would be referred to the Dispute Panel.
May 2011	TIMETABLE CHANGE.			
	Publication of first "Draft of Period Possession Plan" December 2011 only.	Operators can comment on DPPP.		
June 2011	Publication of the "Confirmed Period Possession Plan" (ROTR v.4) for December 2011 only.		Supplied to PTE	
July 2011	"Final Decision Document" for possessions from December 2011 to December 2012, and final ROTR from May 2012 to December 2012.	Final comment/challenge within 15 days.		Disputes at this stage unlikely.
August 2011 September 2011 October 2011				
November 2011	Publication of "Draft Period Possession Plan" for May 2012 only.	Operators can comment on DPPP.		
December 2011	TIMETABLE CHANGE			
January 2012	Publication of the "Confirmed Period Possession Plan" for May 2012.		Supplied to PTE.	
February 2012 March 2012 April 2012				
May 2012	TIMETABLE CHANGE			
June 2012	Publication of the "Draft Period Possession Plan" for December 2012.	Operators can comment on DPPP.		
July 2012	Publication of "Confirmed Period Possession Plan" for December 2012.		Supplied to PTE	
August 2012				
December 2012	TIMETABLE CHANGE			

FOUR WEEKLY DRAFT & CONFIRMED PPP'S THROUGHOUT

