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22<sup>nd</sup> September 2015

Ref: DfT003

Dear [REDACTED]

**Re: Improvements to Cambridge - Kings Lynn services**

Thank you for your letter of 25<sup>th</sup> of August.

Firstly, with regard to the development of a potential scheme to allow 8 car operation north of Cambridge on Kings Lynn services, thank you for your support. We have now put papers through our internal panels to allow development work to commence with the aim of providing a GRIP 2 cost estimate and forward programme.

We don't want to commit to a delivery date or provide a cost until the above work is complete, but we do recognise the importance DfT and Ministers have consistently placed on improving services on this route and recognise the urgency of these improvements. As I mentioned when I met with your team in July, there are a few items of scope within the potential scheme that may have significant lead times, for example the possible need for new safe access across the railway at Littleport once 8 car trains are in operation, some signalling alterations, some platform extensions (in some cases to avoid trains trailing back over level crossings) and the need to check through the power supply implications of the longer trains.

We will work with yourselves, ORR and GTR to take this development work forward as quickly as possible. We have already met with GTR for initial discussions with regard to 8 car operation and I agree a further meeting with DfT present would be beneficial as we begin work on this project.

On the issue of the operation of a two trains per hour service to Kings Lynn in the off peak (in hours that freight does not operate), I do understand your frustration with regard to the level crossing issues and in particular, given the length of time the service proposal has been on the table, the time it has taken Network Rail to outline the likely scale of works.

I would point out that we have consistently warned that there would be additional cost and scope from a 2tph service relating to Level Crossings – including through the formal Franchise correspondence pre ITT in 2013 and in the bid review Report of 2014. Linked to this our output commitments in the SBP for the Ely North Junction scheme did not indicate that the junction enhancement alone would deliver a 2tph service. We also noted in the franchise report and ITT correspondence that we are not currently funded in CP5 for any linked level crossing works and so we can't confirm at this point that we are taking that work forward.

Despite this and again noting the importance of moving forward with visible improvements for passengers on the route we would propose the following way forward to seek to unlock benefits as soon as possible:

- Focus initial effort on improved peak services where crowding currently exists and need is greatest – as there are already 2tph in the peaks today - this effectively means prioritise the peak 8 car scheme
- Work together with yourselves and local authorities to review the level crossing situation and agree a short, medium and long term approach to solving the constraints to running additional services in the area
- In the meantime NR to work with DfT and GTR to review if any options do exist for any additional services within the risk parameters of the crossings in question. This could be best achieved by GTR making a revised proposal

that could be tested through our normal TCRA (Timetable Change Risk Assurance Group) process.

The Department have recently established an Anglia Portfolio Board with Network Rail and potentially with operators to further co-ordinate planning, project development and franchising across the different parties involved in Anglia. The next meeting is in October and we propose that we cover next steps on all the above at that session.

Yours sincerely,

c/c