

17<sup>th</sup> October 2022

Daniel Walsh

Dear Daniel

### **Your Freedom of Information Act 2000 (“FOIA”) Request**

I am writing in response to your letter which was received by London North Eastern Railway (“LNER”) on 17/10/2022 in relation to the rollout of automated announcements at LNER managed stations.

You requested the information as set out in the Appendix to this letter (“the Request”).

### **Duty to Confirm or Deny**

LNER has considered your Request and confirms that it holds the information requested.

### **Communication**

The information held by LNER responsive to your Request (the “Withheld Information”) is exempt from disclosure.

#### *FOIA Section 24(1) Safeguarding National Security*

Section 24 allows LNER to refuse to comply with your Request (in whole or in part) when LNER considers releasing information could make the UK or its citizens more vulnerable to a national security threat. The information falls within this exemption for the following reasons.

In the context of LNER, the UK’s National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) identifies transport as one of the thirteen Critical National Infrastructure sectors. Critical Infrastructure is defined by the UK government as ‘critical elements of Infrastructure...the loss or compromise of which would result in major detrimental impact on the availability, delivery or integrity of essential services, leading to severe economic or social consequences or to loss of life.’

In essence, should a cyber-attack be coordinated with a physical terrorist attack on the UK rail network (in this context, the East Coast Main Line) this would severely impede and hinder our ability to react and respond to such a catastrophic event.

I can confirm that the overarching reason as to why LNER has not yet rolled out automated announcements in the context of your request is primarily for Information Security reasons. The technological landscape has changed significantly over the past few years, especially since the late 1990s when other TOCs may have installed the relevant systems, and the requirements placed upon LNER are much more stringent.

In relation to why I withhold information about the technical reasons for the delay, LNER believes that detailing these reasons would provide sufficient information for someone to piece together a picture of our IT landscape. This could then be used to identify areas which could be interpreted or

perceived to be vulnerable (either now or at a future time), leading either to an immediate cyber-attack or be used to formulate plans to comprise our IT systems.

Technology plays a key role in business operations and the rail industry prioritises safety above everything else. If successful, such an attack could severely impede our ability to operate trains as well as compromising safety critical operations, processes and procedures across our control centre and stations. Such processes being designed to maintain standards and keep staff and members of the public safe. LNER has considered the public's interest in releasing information, however LNER believes the public's interest lies in keeping such an important piece of infrastructure safe, thus keeping lives safe.

If you are not content with this response, you have the right to ask for a review. In the first instance you should contact me again to request this. If you choose to exercise that right, and are not satisfied with the outcome of the review, you have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner by contacting:

The Information Commissioner's Office,  
Wycliffe House,  
Water Lane,  
Wilmslow,  
Cheshire,  
SK9 5AF.

Yours sincerely,



Abigail Coates  
London North Eastern Railway Limited

## **APPENDIX**

Dear London North Eastern Railway Limited,

The rollout of automated announcements at LNER stations is by far the slowest rollout of automated announcements i have seen. Newcastle and York seem to be the only ones done so far. This really surprises me as the Worldline system has been used on the railway network for over twenty years so it is not like it is a new system. I think it that it was first installed on the Valley Lines / Wales & Borders / Wales & West / Wessex Trains networks around Cornwall / Devon / Somerset / Wales in around 1997 and 1998 and has been used by multiple operators since so i would not expect issues of a system that has been around for so long. So i am curious what exactly the issues are with the rollout of these Worldline automated announcements.

From speaking to station staff i have been made aware that there are some technical issues and teething issues with the rollout but i am unable to find out any greater details.

Under the Freedom Of Information Act 2000 i would like to request full details of what exactly the issues are that are causing the delays to the Worldline automated announcements being rolled out to your other stations. If it is technical issues i would like to know in greater detail what exactly the issues are. As obviously technical issues could be a lot of things.

Thank you for your help and answers.