



Network Rail's CP6 Business Plan

Consultation response from Campaign for Rail

Introduction

Campaign for Rail is an organisation based in the West Midlands that advocates both general railway development and the best interests of all rail passengers and groups, including Rail User Groups. We are particularly interested in the development of passenger services, facilities for passengers at stations and on trains, freight development, new stations and, where appropriate, the re-opening of lines for new passenger services.

We welcome this opportunity to comment on Network Rail's CP6 Business Plan. Please note that the following comments will generally be confined to aspects of the London North Western Route plan.

Our Comments

The steady progress with re-signalling the West Midlands and Chilterns area is welcomed, particularly as it looks as if virtually all of the West Midlands Region, including the complex New Street station area, will be controlled from WMSC at Saltley by the end of the Control Period.

We note that further adjustments to the present Regional Boundaries (around Worcester and north of Lichfield) are anticipated and this is also welcome as the signalled area will closely match the local passenger network area.

We welcome the progressive elimination of single lead junctions but note that a major constraint to enhanced capacity in the region does remain in the four long single track sections between Leamington Spa - Kenilworth, Droitwich - Stoke Works Jn, Evesham - Worcester (in the Western Route area) and Ledbury - Shelwick Jn (also in the Western Route area). Hopefully, at least two of these important enhancements can be brought forward in CP6.

We note that the elimination of diamond crossovers at relatively quiet junctions (such as Galton Junction and Soho North, both of which were remodelled in CP5) is expected to result in easier maintenance.

However, we are disappointed to see that the need to clear trackside rubbish promptly is not mentioned in the Business Plan. Since 2001 the Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse based on the Environmental Protection Act has set standards and firm targets for the clearance of trackside litter, in both public areas and other operational areas.

Sadly there are several locations in the West Midlands Region - e.g. on the Chase Line south of Bloxwich and several locations on the Cross City line - where household rubbish has been left alongside the track for several years. As a result, it is now impractical for BTP to prosecute the offenders as they are likely to have left the property.

We suggest that Network Rail should have their own specific targets, aligned with the Code of Practice, for the clearance of all parts of its property; including both urban trackside and station areas.

Clearly, in addition to its scrap value, removing surplus sleepers and rail promptly from the trackside after renewals will also contribute to a safe working environment for rail employees.

One of the major disappointments in CP5 was the drastic cut-backs to the "Access for All" and "Small Stations" funding, leaving many small communities without the new, accessible, footbridge they had been promised. Since its inception in 2005 the Access for All scheme has been progressively downgraded in each successive Control Period. We hope to see this funding restored in CP6. Accessible trains need accessible stations!

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