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Record of the application of Network Code Part D4.6 Decision Criteria

Network Rail's decision on capacity allocation for 0045 Saturday 11th April 2026 to 0440 Monday 20th April 2026 for Weeks 2/3 Multi Disciplined Engineering Activities on the West Coast Main Line (NW4001)

Objective (D4.6.1)

To share capacity on the Network for the safe carriage of passengers and goods in the most efficient and economical manner in the overall interest of current and prospective users and providers of railway services.

Decision Criteria Table

Consideration (D4.6.2)	Relevance (Yes/N/A)	Weighting	Evidence	Network Rail Opinion
a. Maintaining, developing, and improving the capability of the Network	Yes	High	<p>Options for taking disruptive Restrictions of Use of this type are limited due to the high volume of mixed traffic running over this route and the industry expectation of maintaining viable alternative routes in line with National Principles and supporting seasonal economies as reviewed with regional stakeholders and industry representatives.</p> <p>In 2024 NR announced that they were to embark on a program of works to improve reliability, capacity, and journey times for both passenger and freight services on the WCML requiring a significant number of disruptive blockades over a period that could spread over 10-15 years.</p> <p>Through meetings with stakeholders, the feedback was that any other items of required disruption would need to align with these Restrictions of Use.</p> <p>The first blockades were published 14-02-2025 in V1 of EAS(ARP) Section 7 26/27.</p>	<p>NR submit that these works support maintaining, developing, and improving the capability of the network. These works are essential to maintain safe and reliable infrastructure.</p> <p>The nature of works planned to be delivered, are part of a wider requirement of interventions to address issue of resilience on operational performance on this heavily used part of the National Network. Whilst NR recognise that the nature of the access is challenging to Rail Operations the plans being developed for the Week 40-42 blockade will form the framework of the strategy for this Restriction of Use.</p> <p>NR submit that once the works are completed, the capability of the network will be improved as there will be a reduction in failures due to poor asset condition and formation and the risk of emergency speed restrictions or line closure will be substantial reduced.</p> <p>The forecast blended unit rate over the year 3 program of works will be an estimated cost of £4,800,000, which is achievable as a result of being able to secure the longer block such as the 9days supplemented by the 54/29hrs and Section 4 EAS access for year 3. Utilizing the 9-day blockade offers efficiency opportunities for delivering the volumes of work required. Based on previous unit rates and forecasted future unit rates we will be</p>

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			<p>Prior to this publication, the requirements of Tri Link underwent a review based on Operator feedback who raised challenges of being able to utilize their assets efficiently. It was then decided to revise the plan by removing the Oxenholme to Carlisle possession but retaining the Preston to Lancaster possession. This was actioned 13-02-25 which was after the data freeze for V1 of EAS(ARP) Section 7 26/27. After a further internal review, the Tri Link programmed advised that the blockade strategy in Year 3 no longer met with the program's objectives and therefore the Preston to Lancaster possession was removed from PPS on the 06-05-25.</p> <p>Consequently, this meant that there were a number non TriLink items of work that had no supporting possessions.</p> <p>To accommodate these items of work NR proposed a strategy named "Year 3 Recovery Plan" which was briefed and discussed with Operators via a series of meetings on 29-May, 12-Jun, 10 Jul 2025.</p> <p>The general feedback was that the proposal, although challenging was dated at the right time of year but some of the FOC's raised concerns about the plan for diverted freight.</p> <p>The output of this feedback is reflected in the plan issued via Appendix 1.7</p>	<p>anywhere between 20% and 50% less efficient if NR weren't able to secure year 3 access and run the risk of not delivering critical renewal volume commitments in CP7</p> <p>NR consider that this Consideration supports the talking of the possession.</p>
b. That the spread of services reflects demand	Yes	Medium	<p>Work has been dated in the period which generally supports the national strategy of supporting Anglo Scottish flows and alternative routes for freight</p>	<p>Without any viable alternative options being proposed by Operators the current dating was selected after review with Operators and consultation with other Routes so that suitable diversionary routes remain open.</p>

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			<p>and in a period prior to the peak season for passenger travel in the area. The limits of the possessions were also developed to support passenger handing strategy and minimising bus replacement were possible.</p>	<p>Potential options suggested to accommodate trains have been reviewed in relation to Single Line Working and passing services, but these were not compatible with the delivery of works proposed.</p> <p>In order to manage the requirements of freight it is acknowledged that a capacity study will need to be delivered however that work cannot commence until the outputs of the East Coast Main Line timetable recast are known, which will also inform the capacity study for the week 40-42 blockade which in turn will form the framework for this proposal.</p> <p>Where known a number of easements have been applied to support train movements. These easements also include removing access on routes elsewhere within NR.</p> <p>Operators will be able to operate services, albeit on a reduced timetable and with services diverted due to the nature of the planned blockade.</p> <p>NR accept that there is an impact on demand for the duration of the works but are seeking to minimise this.</p> <p>NR submit that this Consideration supports the decision to take the possession (in the long term).</p>
c. Maintaining and improving train service performance	Yes	High	<p>The planned activities include Track Renewals, Resignalling Works, OHL Catenary & Contact Wire Renewal which includes addressing life expired assets. Additionally cyclical S&C Junction Tamping, Plain Line Stoneblowing, S&C Crossing renewals are taking place which will reduce the risk of asset failure impacting on performance and improves reliability.</p>	<p>With the removal of the Tri link blockade this is the optimum opportunity to deliver works that are crucial to the ongoing resilience of the infrastructure on a route where when there is an operational failure the impact has a significant impact on both local and national performance. Without delivering these items of work put increased pressure on the maintenance teams to maintain the asset in opportunities that currently do not support the growing backlog of interventions required.</p> <p>Disruptive planned possessions are less disruptive than uncontrolled failures of assets.</p> <p>Without renewing the identified assets, the likelihood of incidents that cause more serious perturbation to the timetable will increase.</p>

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				NR submit this Consideration supports the taking of this possession.
d. That journey times are as short as reasonably possible	Yes	Medium	Due to the nature of the Network in this area there are limited options for passenger diversions. Whilst it is a challenge for freight. alternative routes are available, which may increase journey times.	<p>Whilst NR acknowledge that the this creates a challenge, the limits of the possession have been refined from what was proposed for the original Tri Link blockade to minimise disruption whilst still supporting locations for required works.</p> <p>Disruption has been confined, as much as is reasonably possible and is utilising a time when traffic is at a minimum and alternative routes are available for some services.</p> <p>The possession has been confined to 9 days times to avoid multiple mid-week disruption.</p> <p>NR consider that the short-term impact on operators is outweighed by long-term benefits to the network as a whole.</p>

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e. Maintaining and improving an integrated system of transport for passengers and goods	Yes	Medium	<p>There is need to address outstanding items of work which cannot be delivered in the standard no service period of access.</p> <p>This routes resilience is key for services linking into areas reliant on transport links for supporting economic prosperity and linking into other road, air and sea facilities.</p>	<p>By delivering the works in this opportunity NR will be future proofing parts of the infrastructure for all operators. Without addressing the required works there is an increased risk for short notice intervention which then directly impacts on operational performance at a local and national level.</p> <p>There is a need to maintain an integrated system of transport whilst Network Rail undertakes these works, and this applies to both long and short distance passenger services and for freight.</p> <p>By renewing these assets, reliability will be increased, thus minimising the impact on GBRF in the long term.</p> <p>Without intervention, uncontrolled loss of capability becomes more likely.</p>
f. The commercial interests of Network Rail or any Timetable Participant	Yes	Medium	<p>Whilst some of the activities planned could be delivered in smaller interventions the cost of individual mobilisations mean that longer times are preferable both at a productive and commercial level for NR.</p> <p>Alignment of work items also minimises costs to NR which has to operate within the funding settlements.</p> <p>The affected operators will be compensated via the standard mechanism.</p>	<p>In taking this decision NR are conscious that there is a potential commercial impact on Operators but without any viable options being proposed for consideration the option to do nothing increases the risk of short notice impositions which potentially will have greater commercial cost over an unspecified period of time.</p> <p>The current remit for the West Coast Modernisation North Programme is over the next 15 years to renew life expired infrastructure, introduce modern signalling technology which will improve reliability and resilience support freight growth and enable environmental and economic benefits.</p> <p>All operators will be impacted commercially by this possession. Schedule 4 costs for WCS in this area.</p> <p>Network Rail notes that the detailed commercial costs for any given affected timetable participant are not reflected herein and</p>

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				<p>that those parties may seek to apply a different weight with regard to commercial impact.</p> <p>NR submit this Consideration does not support a decision to take the possession.</p>
g. Seeking consistency with any Long-Term Plan and relevant Development Timetable	N/A	N/A	There is no relevant Long-Term Plan or ESG applicable at this time.	N/A
h. International Paths stability	N/A	N/A	No International Paths are changed.	N/A
i. Mitigating the effect on the environment.	Yes	Low	Any restriction will impact on the ability of Operators to serve customers at the current level and potentially increase levels of road usage in the short term.	<p>Potential planned increase in Road traffic to mitigate the loss of volume from certain Freight flows.</p> <p>Consequential planned increase on local roads due to Bus replacement but these have been mitigated through Operator feedback in terms of possession limits and locations.</p> <p>NR submit that this Consideration does support taking the possession.</p>
j. Enabling operators to utilize their assets efficiently	Yes	Medium	The possession will impact all operators on them being able to utilise their assets under WTT conditions. Planned possessions allow operators to preplan rolling stock deployment and diagram management.	<p>The possession has been created and developed which allows the passenger operators to implement a plan where they can co-ordinate the management of passengers and associated assets. There will be a need for freight to divert but based on formal responses the view is that notified services can be accommodated.</p> <p>NR submit that (in the longer term) this Consideration supports the decision to take the possession.</p>

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k. Avoiding changes to Strategic Train Slots	Yes	Low	This RoU impacts identified Strategic Train Slots but that these are currently non-runners/ not assigned to any operators.	NR have not been made aware of any impacting any required Strategic Train Slots NR submit that this Consideration supports the decision to take the possession.
l. No International Freight Train Slot changes	N/A	N/A	No trains within the IFCN are changed.	N/A

Decision Taken

Having considered all of the above and as detailed in Condition D4.6.2, Network Rail submits that the decision to undertake delivery of the Week 2/3 Restriction of Use is justified by reference to the Network Code and supports the Objective as detailed within Condition D4.6.1 to assist in achieving the safe carriage of passengers and goods in the most efficient and economical manner in the overall interest of current and prospective users and providers of the railway service.