

Arriva Rail North
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Jonathan Cooper
Head of Contracts
Alliance Rail Holdings

10th July 2017

Dear Jonathan,

Arriva Rail North Limited (ARN) response to Alliance Rail Holdings' application for a passenger track access agreement under Section 17 of the Railways Act

Thank you for giving ARN the opportunity to review and comment on Alliance Rail's application for a track access agreement which includes additional rights to underpin services between Euston and Blackpool North from May 2019. ARN is supportive of the significant passenger and socio-economic benefits realisable through improving Blackpool's connectivity, particularly to and from London. Including through connections made with ARN's services, this will stimulate growth in rail travel to and from the town.

As you will be aware, in a standard hour ARN currently operates four trains between Blackpool North and Manchester Airport, Manchester Victoria/Huddersfield, Hazel Grove and York respectively. From May 2018 we plan to continue to operate four trains per hour to Blackpool North, expanding the direct links to and from the town as part of a transformational timetable change committed to through our Franchise Agreement. The two Manchester services are planned to originate at Manchester Airport and Macclesfield, the York service will continue and direct services from Liverpool will be reinstated. In December 2019, the hourly services to Blackpool North from Manchester Airport and York will become Northern Connect Routes. Featuring new Class 195 and 331 rolling stock, the Northern Connect network will provide higher-quality and faster journeys.


ARN has welcomed engagement with Alliance on this application. Constructive discussions have taken place in relation to our initial concerns over timings and performance. Regarding timings, ARN is confident that the finalisation of Alliance's paths between Preston and Blackpool through a collaborative timetable development process will ensure no conflicts arise with our planned services. In particular, ARN is encouraged by Alliance's willingness to flex departure times from Blackpool earlier to align with ARN's proposed hourly pattern departing Blackpool. As agreed between the parties, Alliance will share its detailed plans with ARN to inform further work towards an optimal timetable solution.

Considering performance, ARN is grateful for Alliance agreeing to share the outcome of the capacity modelling currently being undertaken by Network Rail. This will assist with more detailed discussion on performance mitigations. ARN is keen to work closely with Alliance as discussed on the development and implementation of robust regulation and contingency plans to support the introduction of the proposed services. We would also be eager to continue our constructive dialogue with Alliance to engage when appropriate on the more detailed operational plans involving Blackpool North, Kirkham & Wesham and Poulton Le Fylde stations.

Overall as noted above, ARN is supportive of improvements to Blackpool's rail connectivity and the enhancement of direct service provision to and from London. We are encouraged by the discussions that have occurred thus far with Alliance in relation to timings and performance, and look forward to further collaboration in relation to the operation of the proposed services.

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours Sincerely



Georgia Ehrmann
Track Access Manager

Cc Craig Tomlin, Georgina Collinge