

## **Seven Day Railway: better weekend services for passengers**

### **ATOC's view**

- The Seven Day Railway (7DR) initiative is designed to provide significantly better weekend travel for passengers through running a consistent and predictable service throughout the year.
- Train operators are working with Network Rail to meet a 37% planned reduction in disruption experienced by passengers by 2014.
- ATOC welcomes the £220million made available by the Office of Rail Regulation (ORR) to support changed working practices, training and additional infrastructure facilities to achieve 7DR
- Potential revenue benefits are cautiously estimated to be in the range £100m-130m, with external benefits of around £63m.
- Careful planning is required in planning engineering possessions to avoid disruption to late night weekday passenger services (particularly at the end of the week) which can also be heavily loaded.
- Network change proposals need to be carefully monitored for their potential impact on 7DR.

### **Background and key issues**

- The present method of managing engineering work for infrastructure maintenance, renewals or enhancements often involves extended closure of the railway and subsequent disruption for passengers.
- Engineering work was traditionally undertaken principally at weekends - particularly on Sundays, because the level of passenger demand was historically lower than during the week. Sunday trading and the increase in sporting events mean levels of demand on Sunday are now high for many operators, with evidence of repressed traffic levels.
- Over time, Network Rail has moved to more and longer possessions to increase the rate of maintenance and renewals, to reduce costs and to improve safety by excluding trains from affected lines.
- Research by Rail Passengers Committee (now Passenger Focus) shows that through trains, even with extended journey times, are preferred by passengers to an enforced change onto buses for part of the journey.
- The first stage involves a different approach to the way the work is carried out (more, shorter possessions), while the second adds in additional facilities to provide greater flexibility in the way the railway is operated (such as additional crossovers and bi-directional signalling to facilitate single line operation).
- A new disruption index (PDI/P) has been devised to measure the effect of the improvements on passengers in terms of lost time, against which the 37% improvement by 2014 is to be measured.
- The first objective for 7DR in Control Period P4 (2009-2014) targets the routes with the strongest business case for investment. These are the East and West Coast Main Lines, the GW main line between London and Bristol, the Bristol –

Birmingham main line, the Great Eastern Main Line from Liverpool Street via Colchester, Liverpool Street to Stansted Airport, the Midland Main Line from St Pancras International, Waterloo to Weymouth and the South Humberside freight route between Immingham and Doncaster.

- A major workstream has been the identification of those strategic route sections which are critically important and ought not to be closed at any time apart from extremely disruptive works. ATOC and operators are generally seeking a general improvement in network availability at all times, along with much improved forward planning for larger elements of engineering work to allow better train services.
- As track and signalling facilities are renewed and adapted to meet current needs, it is important to ensure that sufficient operational flexibility remains to handle train service changes. ATOC and its members will continue to scrutinise network change proposals for removing surplus capacity to ensure they do not have an adverse impact on 7DR initiatives.

### **Relevant ATOC activity**

- ATOC supports the concept of the 7DR; we have been fully involved in promoting and developing the initiative and in evaluating its benefits.
- We are working to deliver improvement with industry partners through:
  - The Seven Day Railway Industry Governance Group
  - Route Utilisation Strategies
  - The Network Change Process
  - Route Investment Review Groups

### **Key documents/links**

- ORR Determination for Periodic Review, 30 October 2008  
<http://www.rail-reg.gov.uk/upload/pdf/383.pdf>
- Network Rail Strategic Business Plan supporting document: *Seven Day Railway*. October 2007  
[http://www.networkrail.co.uk/browse%20documents/StrategicBusinessPlan/Other%20supporting%20documents/Seven%20Day%20Railway%20\(Final\).pdf](http://www.networkrail.co.uk/browse%20documents/StrategicBusinessPlan/Other%20supporting%20documents/Seven%20Day%20Railway%20(Final).pdf)
- Network Rail Strategic Business Plan Update, April 2008  
<http://www.networkrail.co.uk/browse%20documents/StrategicBusinessPlan/Update/Strategic%20Business%20Plan%20April%20update.pdf>
- Passengers' attitudes toward engineering works, August 2003. Rail Passengers' Council, with support from ATOC. Available from Passenger Focus
- Public Accounts Committee report on *Reducing Passenger Rail Delays by Better Management of Incidents*, November 2008  
<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200708/cmselect/cmpublicacc/655/655.pdf>

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