

Management of Congested Infrastructure

Network Rail's Code of Practice

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Section 1 – Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this Code of Practice

1.1.1 This Code of Practice sets out the principles and procedures that Network Rail will follow in identifying and managing Congested Infrastructure on its Network pursuant to The Railways (Access, Management and Licensing of Railway Undertakings) Regulations 2016 (“The Regulations”), *inter alia*:

Regulation 23 – Scheduling and coordination

Regulation 24 – Ad hoc requests

Regulation 26 – Congested infrastructure

Regulation 27 – Capacity analysis

Regulation 28 – Capacity enhancement plan

1.1.2 The Code of Practice is a transparent guide for stakeholders to aid in the understanding of how Network Rail undertake work on this subject matter and does not form part of the Network Code or any other contractual documents. However, a transparent Code of Practice provides interested parties and Network Rail’s Regions with clarity over the application, process, timings and implications of the Congested Infrastructure process.

1.1.3 For the avoidance of doubt, this document does not override or replace any Regulatory frameworks or obligations. The relevant regulations in respect of Congested Infrastructure as well as the Network Code retain a status of primacy over this document.

1.1.4 For the purpose of this Code of Practice, “Network” is defined as being the network in respect of which Network Rail is the facility owner and operator, and which is situated in England, Wales and Scotland.

1.1.5 Other infrastructure managers are free to copy elements of this Code of Practice to develop their own, or to ask any capacity allocation body that they employ for the purposes of timetabling to do so on their behalf. Doing so does not create obligations or imply a contract in respect of Network Rail either now or in the future. Infrastructure managers will be responsible for maintaining their own Codes of Practice and the obligations triggered by their own declarations.

1.2 Compliance with this Code of Practice

1.2.1 This Code of Practice applies to all of Network Rail and is particularly relevant to those employees dealing with strategic planning as well as capacity planning and timetabling processes in Regions and in the System Operator.

1.2.2 Employees will receive appropriate briefing on the principles and procedures of the Code of Practice. Information may be included in briefing or training materials produced by the System Operator for relevant long-term planning, capacity planning and customer relationship roles.

1.2.3 The Code of Practice will be published on Network Rail's website.

1.3 Review of this Code of Practice

1.3.1 Network Rail will review the application of this Code of Practice from time to time as required and no less than once every 2 ½ years and undertake relevant business assurance activity as required, and propose any changes it believes are necessary to achieve the purpose of the Code of Practice.

1.3.2 Network Rail will consult with stakeholders on any proposed changes to the Code of Practice.

1.3.3 Consultation may include but shall not be limited to;

- publication on the Network Rail website,
- engagement with industry technical groups e.g. OPSG for the purpose of elements concerning timetable decisions,
- invitation to consult extended to timetable participants,
- dedicated industry meetings, and
- informing other relevant stakeholder groups (e.g. infrastructure managers, funders, ORR).

1.4 Queries and comments

1.4.1 The successful implementation of this Code of Practice depends on developing appropriate working relationships between the System Operator, Regions and other stakeholders. Network Rail welcomes feedback on the Code of Practice's content and application at any time.

1.4.2 Comments can be sent to:
Richard Parsons, Capacity Planning Controls Manager
Network Rail, Quadrant:MK
Elder Gate
Milton Keynes, MK9 1EN
Email: Richard.parsons@networkrail.co.uk

1.5 Authorisation for changes to the internal process

1.5.1 Changes to the Code of Practice shall, as an internal protocol, be reviewed and authorised by Network Rail's Sale of Access Rights Panel consistent with the establishment and maintenance of Network Rail's Access Framework and the delegation of authority provided to the Panel.

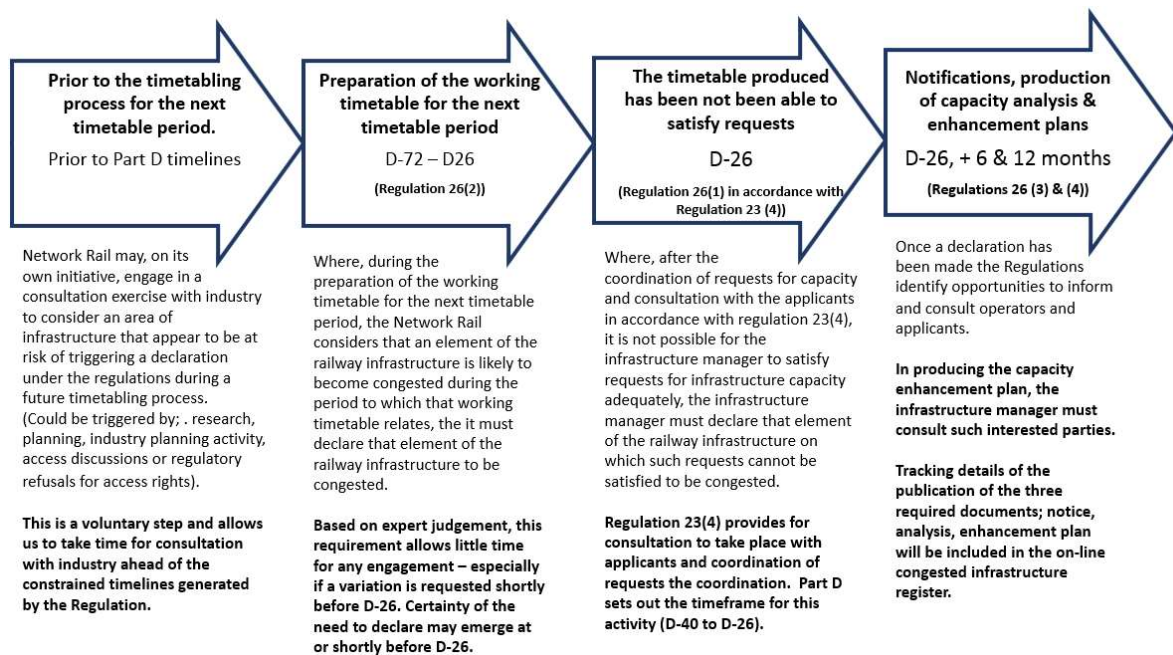
Section 2 –Stakeholder engagement

2.1 Network Rail’s obligations to stakeholders

- 2.1.1 This Code of Practice outlines the process which Network Rail will adopt to:
- a) Informally highlight where congestion may be reasonably anticipated
 - b) Identify and declare areas of congested infrastructure on the network
 - c) Undertake capacity analysis and produce a capacity enhancement plan
 - d) Make decisions regarding the use of congested infrastructure that are consistent with Part D of the network code and the Access and Management Regulations
 - e) Revoke declarations when appropriate
- 2.1.2 This Code of Practice does not change the existing industry processes for the award of access rights, nor the timetabling process set out in Part D of the Network Code.
- 2.1.2 Network Rail seeks to treat and consult all stakeholders in a fair and transparent manner in respect of its approach to declarations of congested infrastructure.
- 2.1.3 Network Rail will advise stakeholders and funders, including other Infrastructure Managers and devolved authorities where appropriate, of potential or imminent declarations as and when these are understood or identified, and will do so at the earliest practicable opportunity

2.2 Working with and understanding our stakeholders

- 2.2.1 This Code of Practice should provide clarification to the rail industry in Great Britain on how the Regulations as they relate to congested infrastructure are implemented on Network Rail’s network.
- 2.2.2 The Regulations have some clearly mandatory elements, but other elements are open to interpretation. There are some areas (such as revocation of a declaration after publication of the subsequent analysis and enhancement plan) where they are largely silent.
- 2.2.3 Network Rail seeks, through the approach outlined here, to meet the needs of its stakeholders by adopting a process that will set out transparent, consistent, unambiguous answers to the questions of interpretation and application of the Regulations relating to congested infrastructure.
- 2.2.4 There are a series of stages as part of the declaration process where stakeholders’ input is either a core part of the declaration processes or a potential aid in the subsequent activity:

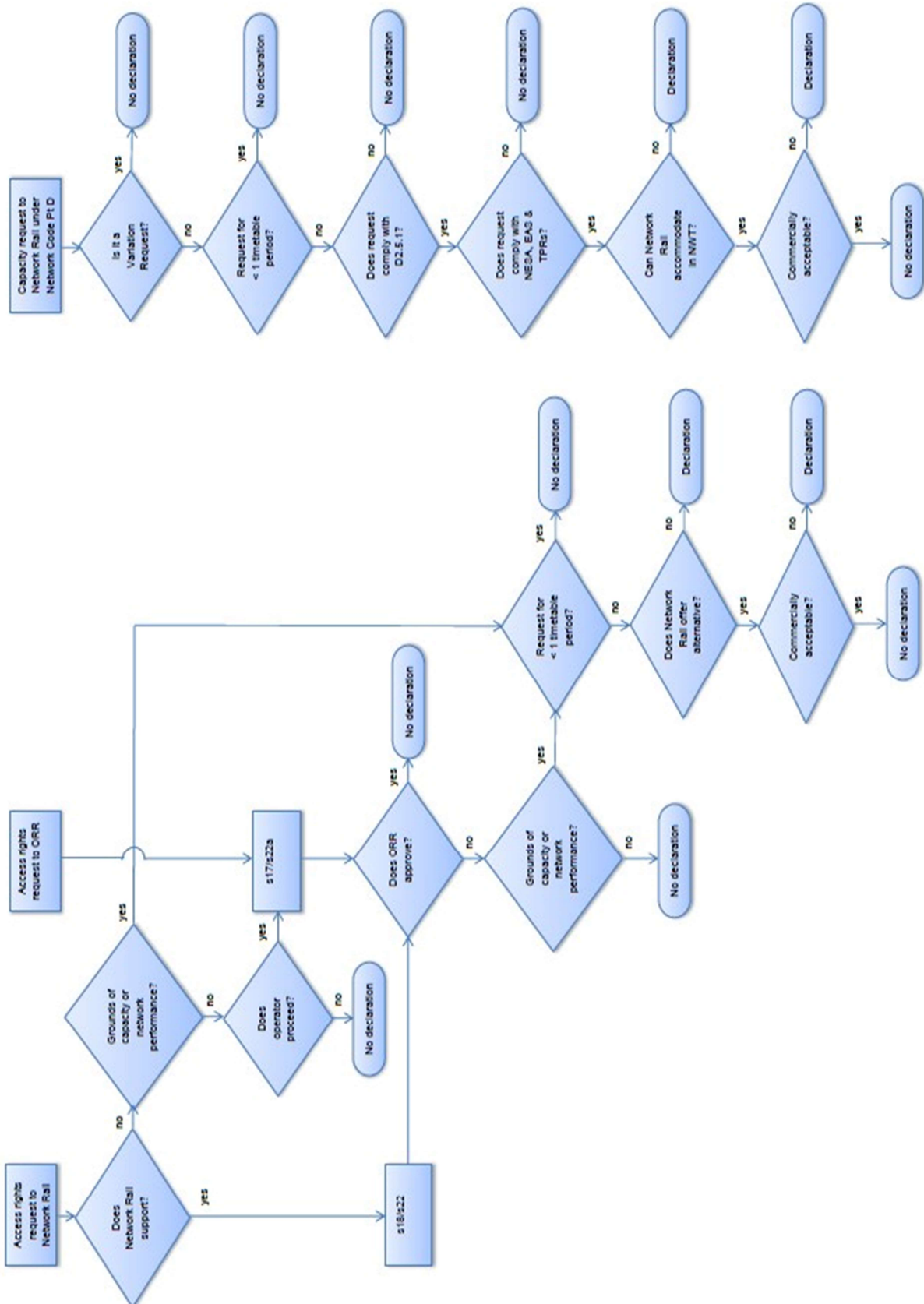


Five principles applicable to the declaration options described above:

- a) An informal early indicator of likely congestion may be triggered during the process of capacity allocation; for example if discussions around access rights changes have identified a lack of capacity to accommodate rights that may reasonably be expected to soon be sought. Where such an emerging risk of congestion is in the view of Network Rail likely to occur, it is Network Rail's intention to issue such an early indicator whenever reasonable and practical to do so. Any informal early indicator will be in anticipation of a future formal declaration and as such it can be expected to focus on factors linked to the formal triggers for any possible future statement.
- b) Coordination of requests for capacity and consultation with appropriate applicants in accordance with regulation 23(4) is required ahead of any declaration being made under regulation 26(1) – See section 3.3;
- c) Network Rail will inform existing users and new applicants of the affected infrastructure of the declaration of congested infrastructure (Regulation 26(3)(a)&(b)) - See sections 3.4 & 3.5;
- d) input may be requested by Network Rail to assist in capacity analysis, on changes to services as described in Regulation 27(3) - See section 3.6;
- e) In producing the capacity enhancement plan, the infrastructure manager must consult such interested parties as it considers necessary, including those described in regulation 26(3) - per Regulation 28 (2) (a) - See section 3.7

- 2.2.5 A declaration of congested infrastructure does not suspend access-related or any other engagement between Network Rail and existing or aspirant users of the designated areas of the network. Access applications should still be discussed and may still be able to be supported, especially if, for example, they address different time periods, contain contingencies or significant flexibility, or seek to support new ways of working. Ongoing engagement may therefore provide routes to resolve a relevant constraint, identify viable alternatives, or otherwise allow accommodation.

Indicative flowchart to accompany section 3



Section 3 – Congested infrastructure

3.1 Principles for the identification of congested infrastructure

- 3.1.1 Regulation 26 sets out circumstances where Network Rail **must** make a declaration of congestion. These are:
- (a) Where, after co-ordination of requests for capacity and relevant consultation with the applicants (“in accordance with regulation 23(4)” – i.e. that part of the process of consulting and coordinating requests during the preparation of a timetable), it is not possible to satisfy all those requests adequately; or
 - (b) Where, during timetable preparation, Network Rail considers that an element of the infrastructure is likely to become congested during the next timetable period.
- 3.1.2 The following sections 3.2 to 3.4 set out the way Network Rail will apply these requirements. For ease of reference the process is shown in a flowchart on page 8. The flowchart is indicative, not definitive; the conditions to be applied are described in full in the text in this section 3.
- 3.1.3 Network Rail will not usually undertake a capacity analysis for a declaration of congested infrastructure if the circumstances that necessitate declaration are anticipated to be for a duration of less than 6 months after which the congestion is resolved and the declaration can be revoked in accordance with Regulation 26 (8).
- 3.1.4 Network Rail will not declare congested infrastructure when the proposal offered in response to the request is consistent with the access rights held and accommodates all paths sought by any given operator. This may include circumstances where the proposal is not commercially acceptable to that operator.
- 3.1.5 Declarations will be made where it is necessary to do so – as may be the case under Reg 26(1) where acceptable timetable solutions lie outside existing flex or other contractual arrangements. Network Rail may revoke a declaration of congested infrastructure resulting from Reg 26(1) if the capacity request can be reasonably resolved or where the offer produced in response to the request is commercially acceptable to the operator. This may include circumstances where the proposal requires an amendment to the operator’s access rights.
- 3.1.6 Commercial acceptability is for the applicant to judge. In order to know whether there is a realistic prospect of providing a commercially acceptable proposal, Network Rail needs help from the applicant to understand the ‘tipping point’ that would make its response commercially acceptable or not. This could for example be the time limit that would trigger an additional resource diagram, or the effect of different days run. Network Rail does not require commercially confidential information for this purpose. This approach reflects the requirement for the Infrastructure Manager to consult appropriate applicants as set out in Regulation 23(4) and determine if it is reasonable to propose

alternative infrastructure capacity from that requested in order to resolve the conflict.

- 3.1.7 In identifying what parts of the infrastructure it should declare to be congested, Network Rail will consider the service pattern, infrastructure and any relevant contractual constraints that are preventing the request from being met adequately.
- 3.1.8 If an operator withdraws a request, Network Rail may decide to continue its consideration of a potential declaration under the condition set out in 3.2.1(c).
- 3.1.9 Declarations of congested infrastructure and notifications of removal of same shall be issued by the Capacity Planning Director.
- 3.1.10 Route Managing Directors may notify the Capacity Planning Director of any circumstances arising in respect of above section 2.2.4 (a) that they believe may warrant an Early Indicator of Likely Congestion.

3.2 Identification of likely congested infrastructure arising from an application for new or amended access rights

- 3.2.1 Network Rail may publish a non-binding 'Early Indicator of Likely Congestion' as an advisory notice to the industry, if:
 - (a) Network Rail decides not to support a reasonable and credible access application (in accordance with its Stakeholder Relations Code of Practice) and where the grounds for its decision include a relevant reference to capacity availability (or lack thereof), congestion, etc. ;
 - (b) ORR rejects an access application on the grounds relevant to capacity (including where this is described in terms of negative systemic impact on the outputs of the network due to density of services). In this case any declaration will be irrespective of whether Network Rail supported the access application;
 - (c) Network Rail considers (or is advised by ORR) that it is likely that one or both of the circumstances described in (a) and (b) above will occur in the next timetable year, i.e. before the December after next;
 - (d) Network Rail publishes any capacity analysis, planning documentation or other relevant material that indicates likely need for a declaration to be made in the next year.
- 3.2.2 The circumstances in 3.2.1 include consideration of network performance impact, i.e. the expected increase in *reactionary* delay arising from the proposed additional/changed service(s).
- 3.2.3 A proposal which is not supported by Network Rail and/or ORR solely because of concerns about the *primary* delay it will cause (for example, because of rolling stock known to be unreliable) would not be the basis of a potential declaration of congested infrastructure.

- 3.2.4 An 'Early Indicator of Likely Congestion' is not a Declaration of Congested infrastructure under the Regulations. It does not trigger any of the related requirements and is not intended to be treated as a Declaration by the Network Code. It is however intended to provide transparency for the industry of those areas that may be approaching a declaration and may be used as by Network Rail to engage in consultations and analysis for use in any future declarations.
- 3.2.5 Where such an emerging risk of congestion is in the view of Network Rail likely to occur; it is Network Rail's intention to issue such an early indicator whenever reasonable and practical to do so. Any informal early indicator will be in anticipation of a future formal declaration and as such it can be expected to focus on factors linked to the formal triggers for any possible future statement.

3.3 Co-ordination of requests for capacity made through Part D of the Network Code

- 3.3.1 In the event of conflict between different requests for infrastructure capacity while preparing the next working timetable, Network Rail is required under regulation 23 to consult the applicants and co-ordinate requests to attempt to ensure the best possible matching of all requirements. This obligation will be discharged during the timetable preparation period.
- 3.3.2 The co-ordination obligations in Regulation 23 could involve industry parties in significant cost, it also recognises (Regulation 23(4)) that it may only go as far as is reasonable in its attempt to propose alternatives. This Section (3.3) of this Code of Practice transparently identifies a threshold to be commonly used to determine what minimum is reasonable.
- 3.3.3 If a request for capacity conflicts with others, then Network Rail will attempt to resolve each separate conflict it identifies.
- 3.3.4 In attempting to resolve the conflicts, Network Rail will consider the retiming of other train paths in addition to those involved in the conflict, exercising its flexing right, having due regard to the decision criteria. In doing so it will attempt to meet the 'commercial acceptability' test (as described in section 3.4.3 of this Code) for each service.
- 3.3.5 In respect of each specific conflict identified, if all the requests for capacity cannot be satisfied adequately when a minimum of 3 other trains (not directly involved in the conflict) have been retimed and Network Rail has made a decision to not accommodate one or more access proposals received in accordance with the Network Code, Network Rail will declare congested infrastructure. This approach required to balance the need for a minimum quantity of exploratory retiming activity before a declaration is made, with the need to limit the potentially endless amount of such work that Network Rail could undertake in each timetable cycle.

3.4 Identification of congested infrastructure arising from a request for capacity through Part D of the Network Code

- 3.4.1 Network Rail will make a declaration of congested infrastructure if:
- (a) Network Rail, after co-ordination in accordance with regulation 23(4), is unable adequately to satisfy all requests for capacity, subject to the provisions in sections 3.3 and 3.4 of this Code; or
 - (b) Network Rail considers that it is likely that the circumstance described in (a) above will occur within the next timetable year, i.e. before the December after next.
- 3.4.2 Network Rail considers that adequate satisfaction of a request for capacity is delivered when the response to the request is (a) within the parameters of the request or applicable flexing right; or (b) outside the parameters of the request but still commercially acceptable to the operator.
- 3.4.3 Commercial acceptability is for the applicant to judge. In order to know whether there is a realistic prospect of providing a commercially acceptable proposal, Network Rail needs help from the applicant to understand the 'tipping point' that would make the response acceptable or not (e.g. the time limit that would trigger an additional resource diagram, or the effect of different days run). Network Rail does not require commercially confidential information for this purpose. This approach reflects the requirement for the Infrastructure Manager to consult appropriate applicants as set out in Regulation 23(4) and determine if it is reasonable to propose alternative infrastructure capacity from that requested in order to resolve the conflict.
- 3.4.4 Capacity constraints may exist off the Network Rail network; on connected facilities or on infrastructure controlled by other infrastructure managers. Network Rail will only make declarations of congested infrastructure in relation to its own infrastructure. Any other Infrastructure Manager will need to comply with the relevant Regulations themselves, including those pertaining to congested infrastructure as applicable to them.
- 3.4.5 In the case of other infrastructure networks, and recognising the increasing number of cross-network interfaces in Great Britain, Network Rail co-operate with ORR and other infrastructure managers as necessary to help clarify the processes for the consideration of congested infrastructure across network boundaries.
- 3.4.6 Network Rail will not usually declare congested infrastructure if the request that cannot be satisfied adequately falls into one of the following categories:
- (a) The application is incomplete according to the requirements of section D2.5.1 of the Network Code. An incomplete application would not provide sufficient information for Network Rail to assess whether the infrastructure is congested.

- (b) The application is not compliant with the relevant NESAs, EAS and/or TPRs, except where TPRs relate to network capacity e.g. headway or margin against other services. This is so that a declaration is not made in response to applications that are (e.g.) outside the available times of operation.

3.4.7 Network Rail may subsequently revoke any declaration made in connection with this section 3.4, in the event that the circumstances described in section 4.5.1 of this code of practice apply

3.4.8 Network Rail will consider rejection of its own services on the same basis as rejections of requests from applicants.

3.5 The declaration

3.5.1 When Network Rail decides, in accordance with the sections above, to make a Declaration of Congested Infrastructure, it will advise stakeholders as soon as is practical, and before the relevant timetable change date.

3.5.2 All declarations will be made by the Capacity Planning Director.

3.5.3 The advice will include a brief description of the circumstances that gave rise to the declaration, the specific geographical limits of the affected infrastructure, the date on which the declaration was made and the date from which the congested status applies (which would normally be the relevant timetable change date). It will also include commentary on the availability of strategic capacity on the affected infrastructure for ad hoc requests under Regulation 24.

3.5.4 The details of each declaration as listed in section 3.5.2 will also be published, by means of an amendment if necessary, in the Network Statement applicable to the year(s) when the congested status applies.

3.5.5 In the event that a stakeholder believes that Network Rail has not followed this code of practice and failed to make a declaration when it was under an obligation to do so, they should contact the relevant owner of this code.

3.6 Capacity Analysis

3.6.1 Regulation 27 sets out requirements for the Capacity Analysis.

3.6.2 The analysis must identify the reasons for the congestion, considering:

- (a) characteristics of the infrastructure;
- (b) operating procedures; and
- (c) characteristics of the train services.

3.6.3 The analysis must also consider measures to alleviate congestion, including but not limited to:

- (a) re-routing of services;
- (b) re-timing of services;
- (c) alterations to the speed of trains within current infrastructure capability; and
- (d) infrastructure improvements.
- (e) Planning rule accuracy and completeness
- (f) operational changes
- (g) reduction or combination of services to release capacity

3.6.4 In considering these potential measures, Network Rail will include potential changes to the TPRs (constrained by the technical capability of the infrastructure), and radical diversions and/or service pattern alterations unconstrained by existing contracts. The analysis will not necessarily be limited to the infrastructure that was subject to the declaration of congestion; other infrastructure may be included where relevant. The analysis will include comment on the consequences of the potential measures for the availability of strategic capacity and/or for ad hoc requests under Regulation 24.

3.6.5 Network Rail (System Operator with Regional input and support provided as required) will produce a capacity analysis report in consultation with the Department for Transport (and, in Scotland, Transport Scotland) and/or any other stakeholders it considers appropriate.

3.6.6 The report will be published on the Network Rail website no later than 6 months after the date on which the declaration of congested infrastructure was made. Network Rail will advise stakeholders of its publication.

3.7 *Capacity enhancement plan*

3.7.1 Regulation 28 sets out requirements for the capacity enhancement plan. The plan must identify:

- (a) Reasons for the congestion;
- (b) The likely future development of traffic;
- (c) Constraints on infrastructure development;
- (d) Options for and costs of enhancing capacity, including the potential effect on charges;
- (e) Details of the action to be taken to enhance the capacity of the congested infrastructure (following cost benefit analysis); and
- (f) A timetable for completion of the detailed measures identified.

3.7.2 The GB rail industry has a well-established framework for identifying future requirements and planning capacity investment in a holistic way. Together with input from industry planning activities, Network Rail's core Long-Term Planning Business Process with relevant System Operator and Regional / Route planning documents may be expected to satisfy most of the requirements of Regulation 28 in respect of the capacity enhancement plan.

3.7.3 Network Rail will produce a capacity enhancement plan in consultation with stakeholders, referencing other published strategies where these exist and are appropriate in order to minimise duplication. The plan cannot commit any funder to any investment, and the usual industry funding processes will apply to determine which investments are made and when.

- 3.7.4 The plan will not necessarily be limited to the geography that was subject to the declaration of congestion; other infrastructure may be included where relevant.
- 3.7.5 A draft of this document will be shared with the Appropriate Minister no later than 9 months after the date on which the declaration of congestion was made, for their approval. This is two months earlier than the requirement of Regulation 28, at the request of the Department for Transport.
- 3.7.6 The document will be published on the Network Rail website no later than 12 months after the date on which the declaration of congested infrastructure was made, regardless of whether Ministerial approval has been received. Network Rail will advise stakeholders of its publication.

Section 4 - Consequences of a declaration of Congested Infrastructure

4.1 Congested Infrastructure Register

- 4.1.1 Network Rail will maintain a Congested Infrastructure Register that will include details on: the date of declaration; status of and publication due dates for, the Capacity Analysis and Capacity Enhancement Plan for each declaration; revocation dates and any relevant notes or links.
- 4.1.2 The Register shall be published on Network Rail's website and details of its purpose and location will be included in the Network Statement.

4.2 Notice to Operators

- 4.2.1 A declaration triggers a notice to affected operators (Section 3.5), a capacity analysis (Section 3.6) and Capacity enhancement plan (Section 3.7).

4.3 Capacity allocation on congested infrastructure

- 4.3.1 Regulation 26 permits priority criteria to be set by Network Rail for the allocation of capacity on congested infrastructure. These must:
 - (a) take account of the relative importance of services to society; and
 - (b) ensure the adequate consideration of freight services.
- 4.3.2 Section D4 of the Network Code sets out the processes that Network Rail will follow and the factors that it will consider in making decisions on the priorities for the allocation of scarce capacity; on congested infrastructure these will be applied with regard for the requirements of the regulations.
- 4.3.4 A declaration of congested infrastructure does not prohibit reserve capacity being kept available within the final working timetable to enable Network Rail to respond rapidly to foreseeable *ad hoc* requests for infrastructure capacity,

and the evaluation of such need should be undertaken in line with the requirement set out in Regulation 24(4).

- 4.3.5 Once a declaration of congested infrastructure has been made, Network Rail will comply with the requirements set out in Regulation 29 concerning use of train paths.

4.4 Supplementary access charges on congested infrastructure

- 4.4.1 Schedule 3 of the Regulations permits a scarcity charge to be levied for the use of congested infrastructure, where this charge has been set out in the applicable Network Statement.

- 4.4.2 Network Rail does not levy such a charge. Implementation of a congested infrastructure (scarcity) charge may or may not be considered for Control Period 7 through ORR's review of access charges for the 2023 Periodic Review.

4.5 Revocation of a declaration

- 4.5.1 If the circumstances giving rise to the declaration of congested infrastructure are resolved within 6 months of the date from which the infrastructure was deemed to be congested, then Network Rail will revoke the declaration and advise stakeholders accordingly. Such circumstances may include; revised information from operators or the infrastructure manager that would have had the effect of changing the relevant circumstances, alternative and agreed timetable offers that reasonably address capacity requirements, an application for access that triggered a declaration itself being for less than 6 months or, confirmation at any point following the publication of the new Working Timetable, that the relevant operator(s) are content with the working timetable. In this case, neither a capacity analysis report nor a capacity enhancement plan will be produced in response to that declaration of congestion.

- 4.5.2 During the initial consultation period in respect of each timetable change date, Network Rail will review each section of the infrastructure where either a) an 'Early Indicator of Likely Congestion' or b) a Declaration of Congested Infrastructure has been made and not revoked, considering whether, for the period to which the timetable will apply, there is likely to be a material change in circumstances such as the supply of infrastructure capacity or the demand for the use of infrastructure capacity.

- 4.5.3 If Network Rail considers that there is likely to be such a material change, then Network Rail will write to timetable participants during the initial consultation period so that any access proposals they submit at or after the priority date can be made with knowledge of this likely material change. Then, either:

- (a) Where the relevant Early Indicator of Likely Congestion was made, Network Rail will review during the timetable preparation period whether, in the period to which the timetable will apply, the infrastructure is likely to become congested; or

- (b) Where the relevant declaration of congested infrastructure was made in response to a request for additional or amended capacity through Part D of the Network Code, Network Rail will review during the timetable preparation period whether, in the period to which the timetable will apply, the infrastructure is likely to remain congested according to the principles set out in section 3.2 of this Code.

4.5.4 If these reviews find that there has been a material change and that the infrastructure is not likely to remain congested, then:

- (a) Network Rail will advise stakeholders of its intention to revoke the statement or declaration with effect from the relevant timetable change date.
- (b) Subject to appropriate consideration of any representations received within the five working days after this advice is given, Network Rail will confirm the revocation to stakeholders before the relevant timetable change date.

Glossary:

The Act	The Railways Act (1993) as amended.
Appropriate Minister	If the capacity enhancement plan relates wholly to infrastructure in Scotland, Scottish Ministers; if the capacity enhancement plan relates in part to infrastructure in Scotland, the Secretary of State and Scottish Ministers acting jointly; otherwise, the Secretary of State
Capacity Enhancement Plan	a measure or series of measures with a calendar for their implementation which aim to alleviate the capacity constraints which led to the declaration of an element of railway infrastructure as “congested infrastructure”
Congested infrastructure	Infrastructure declared congested under Regulation 26 where the declaration has not been revoked
Control Period 6	April 2019 – March 2024
Control Period 7	April 2024 – March 2029
Decision criteria	The criteria set out in section D4.6 of the Network Code.
EAS	Engineering Access Statement
Initial consultation period	The period for consultation concerning a new timetable as defined in Part D of the Network Code.
NESA	National Electronic Sectional Appendix
Network Rail variation	A proposal to vary the timetable after the timetable preparation period, as defined in Part D of the Network Code.
NTF-OG	National Task Force – Operators Group
OPSG	Operational Planning Steering Group
ORR	Office of Rail and Road
Priority date	The date, 40 weeks before the commencement of the relevant timetable, by which operators should submit their access proposals, as defined in Part D of the Network Code
Regulation(s)	The Railways (Access, Management and Licensing of Railway Undertakings) Regulations 2016 as amended from time to time.
Stakeholders	Existing users of the congested infrastructure; new applicants for use of the congested infrastructure; ORR; the Department for Transport; and (if any element of the congested infrastructure is in Scotland) Transport Scotland.
Timetable change date	A date for the implementation of timetable changes as defined in Part D of the Network Code
Timetable period	The period between timetable change dates as defined in Part D of the Network Code
Timetable preparation period	The period for compilation of a new timetable as defined in Part D of the Network Code
TPRs	Timetable Planning Rules
Train operator variation request (TOVR)	A proposal to vary the timetable after the timetable preparation period, as defined in Part D of the Network Code