



Eddie Dempsey, Senior Assistant General Secretary (RMT)
Harish Patel, National Officer (Unite)
Chris Hargrave, Organiser (TSSA)

20th June 2022

Dear Eddie, Harish and Chris

Invitation to commence formal consultation

I am writing to invite you to a formal consultation meeting on 1st July 2022 at 10:00 hours at Eversholt Street.

Background

We have engaged with our recognised trade unions via RIRG and directly on the need for reform to working practices. This has included extensive consultation over the last two years on the implementation of technologies to make the railway safer for our people and passengers, as well as more efficient for the passenger and taxpayer.

As you will recall at RIRG, at an industry level, in principle the need for changes to working practices was agreed to ensure that the rail industry became sustainable.

However, many hours spent in discussions both under the auspices of RIRG and more recently under our own collective processes we have not managed to make meaningful progress.

In particular we have been meeting since earlier this year with the aim of seeking a negotiated settlement on how to effectively deploy our Maintenance and Works Delivery organisations in light of the post Covid increased financial deficit with which our industry is now faced.

We have always made clear to you that we needed to make material progress in these discussions and that we needed to implement meaningful changes to working practices by April 2023.

I am still hopeful that we can agree a way forward.

Formal consultation on proposed changes, including redundancies

We cannot, however, delay any longer and with that in mind we intend to consult formally with you on the implementation of changes to a number of working practices which we believe can be changed within the existing agreements and T&Cs under which our Maintenance and Works Delivery staff are employed. We will also press ahead with consultation on the implementation of certain technologies in order to make the railway a safer and more efficient workplace.

Whilst we do not believe that we need the agreement from our trade unions to make these changes, we would much prefer to implement them with your agreement and co-operation.

We recognise also that once the changes are implemented, our need for Maintenance and Works Delivery staff is likely to reduce, and so we will need also to commence formal redundancy consultation with our trade unions under s188 of the 1992 Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act.

Again, whilst we do not have to agree those redundancies with our trade unions, we would much prefer to implement them with your agreement and co-operation. We very much hope (and anticipate) that sufficient employees will volunteer for redundancy to avoid the need to make anyone compulsorily redundant.

Accordingly, the purpose of the meeting will be to:

- commence formal consultation on Network Rail's proposals to implement changes to working practices for all Maintenance and Works Delivery general grades; and
- as a result of those changes, to begin consultation with you on redundancies potentially arising as a result of the implementation of changes to working practices.

The proposed changes to the working practices will include but are not limited to:

- implementing individual rostering, standardising the allocation of night and weekend working and a revised roster authorisation process; and
- introducing joint incident response teams i.e., where our front line colleagues work collaboratively to assist each other and respond to incidents together whilst maintaining their engineering discipline. This would also apply for maintenance tasks where applicable.

Detailed information will be sent to you prior to the meeting in accordance with our collective bargaining agreement and the statutory requirements including under s188 of the 1992 Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act.

In the meantime, as always, we are open to meet and discuss how we work together to achieve our aim of modernisation.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Rutter', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Paul Rutter
Programme Director, Modernising Maintenance
Chair of National Maintenance Council