

Communication from Train Horns Steering Group

Issue 6

Nov 24 2006

The cross industry Train Horns Steering Group met on 16 November 2006 to review progress and agree further action.

1. Progress since fifth Communication

- All work streams involving external work are now completed or in their last few days. Reports have been received from AD Little, Faulkland Associates and Spectrum Associates and are being reviewed for publication. The final report in support of defining a revised train horns standard is due to be delivered by the end of November.
- The Steering Group met with the Noise Abatement Society in October and covered a number of areas that were of concern to the NAS – the speed with which the work is being done, the nature of any likely recommendations, contact with the manufacturers of broadband horns and the NAS suggestion relating to temporary sound barriers (reported in previous Communication)
- RSSB reported to the Steering Group on 16 November that the programme of work published in June is broadly on schedule – these workstreams are all in support of the evaluation of the following:
 - Broadband Horns
 - Reducing level of sound of train horns
 - Night time ‘ban’
 - Reducing the number of locations horns are sounded (Whistle Boards)
- Network Rail has continued with their programme to review particular problem areas and the table that summarises the progress is included in this communication.

2 Commentary on progress with the consideration of potential national solutions

- The steering group considered the draft AD Little and Faulkland Associates reports and also considered a first set of draft recommendations. The Group confirmed that it expects to be in a position to make its final recommendations to the industry when it meets in December.

- The Steering Group is now focussing on the nature of the recommendations and the timing for the implementation of each of the components. It is planning to recommend a new lower sound pressure level for all new or replacement horns, and the final piece of work is currently being completed to support this recommendation.
- In addition to the options that have been publicised to date, a further option relating to the use of the 'soft' tone horn only at Whistle Boards is under consideration. The Steering Group believes that where this is a feasible option (not all rolling stock has the capability to sound only the soft tone) it will be possible to introduce this change early in 2007.
- Work to complete the specification of what will constitute a quieter horn is on course for completion before the end of the year, although the demonstration of a useable Broadband horn is likely to extend into 2007.

3 Notes on implementation

- Those recommendations that relate to the sound levels of horns and the times at which horns are sounded are governed by two industry documents – the first is a Railway Group Standard known as the Audibility Requirements for Trains (Reference GM/RT2484) and the other is known as The Rule Book,(reference GE/RT8000). Both documents are owned and published by RSSB and can be found on the RSSB web site (www.rssb.co.uk - follow the link to Railway Group Standards). In order to change the requirements within the Railway Group Standard or Rule Book a case for change has to be put to the relevant cross industry committee for approval. Both of the relevant committees have been briefed on progress with this review and stand ready to consider the recommendations to change the rules.
- Any changes to the number of Whistle Boards, over and above those reviewed and removed by Network Rail under the current rules, will require a new risk assessment approach. The work that has been undertaken under the guidance of the Steering Group will be turned into a recommended set of amendments to the risk assessment model for consideration by Network Rail.

4. What we are now going to do

- Work to finalise the recommendations and all supporting documentation
- Meet with All party group of MPs on 5 December
- Produce final recommendations, and public communications in December
- Hand over the work of the steering group to the relevant industry parties for consideration

The cross industry Steering Group consists of representatives from: Rail Safety and Standards Board, Network Rail, Passenger Train Operators, ATOC, Freight Train operators, ORR, and is supported by RSSB's technical and risk expertise.

If you want to communicate directly with the steering group you can do so through the Chairman, Anson Jack, who is director, standards at the Rail Safety and Standards Board at anson.jack@rssb.co.uk

Updated list of Whistle Board reviews undertaken by Network Rail

Accurate as of 24 October 2006

Constituency	Result
Arundel and South Downs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whistle boards removed at Warning Camp, Arun Valley. Options at Peppering re: whistle boards are still being investigated and discussed locally, such as diversion of the footpath.
Rochford and Southend East	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whistle boards removed at Woodgrange Close, Southend-on-Sea, Essex after extensive vegetation clearance.
Sittingbourne and Sheppey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The whistle-boards at Church Street (Newington) and Bobbing where visits were undertaken have been removed after vegetation removal. Frognal Farm (Tonge) boards also removed. Teynham FP needs more than a little vegetation trimming, including station barriers removed and replaced with a different design that does not obscure sighting - responsibility of South Eastern trains Bax has been removed. Goodhews, London side of the one at Bobbing, was also recently assessed and boards now removed.
Basildon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Removed whistle boards at Stanford-Le-Hope on 21 May after discussions with local resident, vegetation removal and new risk assessment.
Wokingham	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set of whistle boards removed between Sandhurst station and Crowthorne station.
Canterbury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visited nine locations Sturry FP, Milner Court, Park Alley and Deanery and Tonford B all removed. Folly Farm to have foliage cleared before removal. Kent CC is looking in to the closure of Sanpit footpath crossing.
Romsey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Crampmoor whistle boards removed in June after re-assessment of the crossing sighting.
Guildford	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pinks Hill will soon be removed, with an awareness campaign being planned before its removal.
Bexhill and Battle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forge, Etchingam - Removed
North East Hampshire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whistle boards removed at Rooksdown, Isington, Hants Bentley, Hants. Removal of set of whistle boards and amendment to working practice with SWT so trains no longer whistling when leaving the station.
Surrey South West	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shutters, Haslemere. Whistle boards removed after consultation with neighbours and removal of foliage from their property.
Hampshire East	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liss Forest, Hants. Whistle boards removed after sighting improved by removal of vegetation and old TP hut.
Thanet North	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brookend, Birchington – Removed

Westmoreland and Lonsdale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train horns between Oxenholme and Windermere. Two of six whistle boards removed following work by Network Rail to achieve safe sight lines. A third whistle board is the subject of an on-going survey.
Aylesbury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saunderton. One whistle board relocated closest to the complaint. • Great Kimble. The curve and vegetation on land make it not possible to remove whistle boards at present.
Warwickshire North	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whitacre Junction at Nether Whitacre. Seeking to divert two of three footpaths over an accommodation bridge in order to take away four whistle boards. Business case in development.
Loughborough	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mountsorrel, Kirby Muxloe. Mountsorrel crossing goes over six tracks and freight loop on a high speed line which has made finding a solution difficult. Kirby Muxloe crossing is close to a golf club and a few houses. Resident's failure to use crossing safely means freight drivers sound additionally. Council speaking with EWS but the curve is too tight to relocate or remove.
Vale of Glamorgan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Llantwit. Whistle boards re-sited after local consultation
Oxford East	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lake St. Newly reported by Member of Parliament and will be investigated.
Pluckley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boards removed on 12 August 2006
Woodside	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boards removed on 12 August 2006
Dynes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boards removed on 12 August 2006
Swanley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boards removed on 22 July 2006
Oxford	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pilgrims Way – vegetation work has been carried out and a new risk assessment is underway to determine whether the whistle boards can be removed. (Oct 06) • Caters – vegetation work planned for November 06 but require possession due to foliage's proximity to line. It is hoped that this will enable the whistle boards to be removed.