

Mr Rynd Smith
Lead Member
National Infrastructure Planning
Temple Quay House
2 The Square Bristol,
BS1 6PN
LondonResort@planninginspectorate.gov.uk

10th January 2022

Dear Mr Smith,

Response by SE Trains Limited (previously London & South Eastern Railway Limited) to questions raised by the Examining Authority in its letter of 21 December 2021 in respect of an application by the London Resort Company Holdings Limited for a delay to the commencement of the Examination of the Application

- 1. Taking the current circumstances into account, can a continued delay in the commencement of the Examination of the Application until June or July 2022 still be justified in the public interest?**

Southeastern recognises the importance of the development proposal, and the many possible benefits it could bring to both the local and wider economy. Accordingly, Southeastern has spent a significant amount of time utilising specialist resource during 2021 working with both industry partners and the applicant to identify the impact on Southeastern's Highspeed and Metro services. It is therefore disappointing that the lack of communication and agreement (including in respect of funding) on next steps puts at risk the deliverability of key milestones required to deliver the infrastructure and resource plans essential to deliver the step change in service levels needed to protect existing passengers and to enable future growth and thereby support the Resort. Southeastern feel that it is highly unlikely that the applicant will be in a position to complete a meaningful review and reissue of documentation, after consultation with interested parties, by March 2022 so Southeastern feel it is more pragmatic to support the proposed extension to the Summer of 2022 on the basis the extension is not permitted to go on indefinitely.

Southeastern remain available and prepared to continue working to aid the applicant to develop a robust rail strategy, and we request that the applicant provides concise clear plans and timelines as to how this can be achieved.

- 2. If a delay is still justified:**
 - a. What steps will or should the applicant take to assure the ExA that the time period of the delay is justified;**

We suggest the applicant is requested to clearly identify the amendments required to the application documentation to support the rail strategy, to work with the industry to provide a robust programme of how it intends to deliver these to allow Examination of the Application to take place by Summer 2022.

If the applicant is unable to achieve these programme milestones then it should consider withdrawing the application for the time being, to prevent further uncertainty.

b. Is a schedule of updated and new documents and a schedule of consultation sufficient to justify ongoing delay; and, if not

We do not believe so.

c. What regular reports and other information should be provided to the ExA by the applicant and by what dates, to demonstrate that progress is being made and that the extension of time is being put to good use, which in turn might be suggested as being sufficient to offset the harm caused by ongoing delay and is therefore in the public interest; and

It would be useful to Southeastern if the ExA were to set out a clear timetable of dates for the milestones to be achieved by the applicant to get to an Examination in the summer of 2022.

d. What further steps should the ExA take if commitments to progress continue not to be met?

To avoid further uncertainty, if subsequent programme milestones are not met, we ask the ExA to consider the withdrawal of the current application to allow LRCH to prepare a fresh DCO for submission.

3. If, taking account of the changed circumstances, further delay is not justified, would it be appropriate for the ExA to curtail delay and to proceed directly to Examine the application as currently before it, commencing in March 2022?

We are concerned that this would allow insufficient time for the applicant to update documentation and to finalise its rail strategy.

4. What other considerations might be relevant to this procedural decision?

None so far as Southeastern is aware

5. What other possible measures might the ExA lawfully and fairly decide to take in the circumstances and recognising the concerns of parties?

None so far as Southeastern is aware

Southeastern believes that the London Resort offers significant opportunity to deliver a transformational change to the area, as well as wider economic benefits, and that the rail network has a significant role to play in the transport links enabling this potential development. However, doing this needs to be part of an integrated, comprehensive rail strategy agreed by all affected parties, and ensuring that the needs of existing as well as new users are sustainably met. We remain committed to continuing to work with industry partners and the applicant to identify and agree all the actions required to facilitate these objectives whilst maintaining our Health and Safety obligations and overall quality of service.

Southeastern remains committed to assisting the Examining Authority in regard of this application in any way we can, so if there are any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

SE Trains Limited