

17th April 2003

ERTMS Moves to Next Development Stage

The Strategic Rail Authority and Network Rail are to take development of the European Rail Traffic Management System (ERTMS) to its next stage of testing and development. Future multi-supplier testing will now concentrate on the Old Dalby test track in the East Midlands.

The SRA is leading the formation of the new Single National ERTMS Programme (SNEP), which draws together three train control programmes already started by the West Coast Main Line, ERTMS and Network Rail expert project teams.

As a result, associated development work on the West Coast Main Line programme will be migrated into the national programme. This is due to the impracticability of conducting future systems trials on this heavily used passenger and freight line and the need to develop an ERTMS train control system which also meets the broader aim of achieving capacity improvements.

David Waboso, SRA Executive Director, Technical, said:

"The ERTMS train control system is moving to the next important phase of development. The single National Programme team under SRA leadership will now concentrate its efforts on tests and trials including work to resolve the telecommunication issues which remain a key technical challenge with ERTMS. We will continue to work in close partnership with our colleagues in the EU to ensure that the UK development work is fully synchronised with theirs."

Notes to Editors:

1. Where possible, the National ERTMS programme will secure key WCML resources. For instance, the telecommunication masts already erected will be incorporated in the final ERTMS system when it goes operational between 2010 - 2015.
2. The next phase of development at Old Dalby will test the technology and equipment aspects of the Level 2 "no lineside signals" - variant of ERTMS recommended by the April 2002 (expert team) report, as recently endorsed by the HSC.
3. The draft West Coast Route Modernisation (WCRM) strategy published by the SRA in October 2002 presaged today's announcement on moves towards a national programme for ERTMS implementation (see Appendix B within the draft WCRM strategy for further details). The final WCRM strategy will be published by the SRA in May 2003.

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