FUTURE RAILWAY OPERATIONAL CONTROL

This memorandum describes a study undertaken between October 1987 and April 1989 into the future of railway operational control, its role and the systems it may require to fulfil that role. The operations control function of today is briefly described and a view of the future form of the function is proposed, using various aspects of new and emerging technology.

Developments in computer technology as utilised in the proposed system offer the opportunity to redefine the control function in the following ways:

- To establish a flexible, integrated system operating over the whole of British Rail.
- To enable the provision of comprehensive, real-time information in the form most suitable for the controller.
- To use artificial intelligence techniques to capture individual experience and make it available in all decision making.
- To eliminate book-keeping and form-filling.
- To build up a control knowledge base by analysing decisions and their consequences.

The benefits to British Rail of investment in change would include:

- Cost savings by improved punctuality and less delay.
- Cost savings by better utilisation of resources.
- Reduced number of staff in Control.
- Improved standards by greater consistency in decision making and improved training methods.
- Improved responsiveness to events.
- Improved 'professionalism' of control staff leading to better motivation, performance and job satisfaction.

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