

Oliver Stewart
RAIB Recommendation Handling Manager



25 June 2026

Mr Andy Lewis
Deputy Chief Inspector of Rail Accidents

Dear Andy,

RAIB Report: Freight train derailment at East Somerset Junction on 20 March 2017

I write to provide an update¹ on the action taken in respect of recommendation 3 addressed to ORR in the above report, published on 13 December 2017.

The annex to this letter provides details of actions taken in response to the recommendation and the status decided by ORR. The status of recommendation 3 is **'Closed'**.

We do not propose to take any further action in respect of the recommendation, unless we become aware that any of the information provided has become inaccurate, in which case I will write to you again.

We will publish this response on the ORR website.

Yours sincerely,

Oliver Stewart

¹ In accordance with Regulation 12(2)(b) of the Railways (Accident Investigation and Reporting) Regulations 2005

Recommendation 3

The purpose of this recommendation is to reduce the probability that sections of track might inadvertently be missed from train-based track inspections.

Network Rail should improve its processes for specifying and controlling the configuration of the route definitions used by its track measurement trains. The improved arrangements should take account of the needs of all relevant stakeholders and clarify ownership of the data. Where temporary closures of sections of line are necessary, the steps to reactivate train-based measurement should be clearly defined.

ORR decision

1. Network Rail had developed a new Performance and Coverage tool to provide infrastructure monitoring information to the routes. Our feedback on the first version of the closure statement was for Network Rail to more clearly explain how the final point in the recommendation had been addressed: Where temporary closures of sections of line are necessary, the steps to reactivate train-based measurement should be clearly defined.
2. We received an updated closure statement in August 2025 that addressed this point, but we further challenged Network Rail to demonstrate how the revised process was made available to those that need it. In response Network Rail provided a newly created brief and stated that the process for reinstatement will now be included on the issuing of any future train plans, thus making it visible to all that require to be made aware of it.
3. After reviewing the information provided ORR has concluded that, in accordance with the Railways (Accident Investigation and Reporting) Regulations 2005, Network Rail has:
 - taken the recommendation into consideration; and
 - taken action to close it.

Status: Closed.

Previously reported to RAIB

4. On 12 December 2018 ORR reported the following:

We accept the proposed work to address the recommendation Network Rail have set out. We were concerned about the start date and long timescale for delivery and asked Network Rail to demonstrate to us the level of confidence they have in the current routing process for track measurement trains and how issues (black holes/ missed runs etc.) are communicated to TMEs. We also asked Network Rail what interim risk controls they are putting in place while the work to develop and deliver

revised arrangements is carried out. Network Rail have addressed these issues in their subsequent update.

Update

5. On 5 September 2023 Network Rail provided the following closure statement:



[N217-11] East
Somerset Jn Rec 3.docx

6. On 28 August 2025 Network Rail provided the following updated closure statement:



N217-11 East
Somerset Jn Rec 3.docx

7. On 7 November 2025 Network Rail provided the AIS Procedure Capture Form:



DC IM Train Planning
Team - Additional Work

8. On 19 November 2025 Network Rail provided the following update:

Minimum train-borne recording frequencies for ultrasonics / PLPR / track geometry are dictated by NR standards NR/L2/TRK/001 and NR/L3/TRK/1015. Route Engineering Teams advise the Infrastructure Monitoring Team where recording is required at a frequency greater than the NR standards. The AIS Infrastructure Monitoring plan is formed against the NR standards and Route Requirements. The 'Data Collection Additional Work Request Process' is owned by the AIS Team and shared on their associated SharePoint. Each Route is briefed and aware of the required process to amend the track recording plan via the Route Asset Engineer. Periodic Meetings between AIS and each Route to monitor performance v plan and any future change requirements.

9. On 3 April 2026 Network Rail provided the following update:

Following the meeting on 6 March, NR have done:

- *A re-brief to the Regions around the process for closures and reactivation of the IM Train plan has been produced and shared with all Senior Regional Asset Engineers. Tracking of receipt of the brief is being maintained.*
- *On all future issues of the Train Plan the brief and process diagram will also be reattached to ensure continued awareness.*



Reactivation of
Train-Based Measurer

From the conversations held I believe this should answer the outstanding queries.

Previously reported to RAIB

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ORR decision

1. We accept the proposed work to address the recommendation Network Rail have set out. We were concerned about the start date and long timescale for delivery and asked Network Rail to demonstrate to us the level of confidence they have in the current routing process for track measurement trains and how issues (black holes/ missed runs etc.) are communicated to TMEs. We also asked Network Rail what interim risk controls they are putting in place while the work to develop and deliver revised arrangements is carried out. Network Rail have addressed these issues in their subsequent update.

2. After reviewing the information provided ORR has concluded that, in accordance with the Railways (Accident Investigation and Reporting) Regulations 2005, Network Rail has:

- taken the recommendation into consideration; and
- is taking action to implement it by February 2022.

Status: Implementation ongoing. ORR will advise RAIB when actions to address this recommendation have been completed.

Information in support of ORR decision

3. On 26 October 2018 Network Rail provided the following initial response:

Network Rail has secured funding in CP6 to complete a review of the process for specifying and controlling the configuration of the route definitions used by the track measurement trains. As finances cannot be released until CP6, to do thorough scoping work, all of the below dates are indicative and subject to change until the specification has been agreed and there is some indication that the market can deliver within budget and timescales.

As well as improving the processes for specifying and controlling the configuration of the route definitions used by its track measurement trains, Network Rail will also address the following issues:

- *Understanding what sections of track are not covered by a measurement, manual or train-borne, is not easy for the Routes to do. It is highly manual and therefore prone to error.*
- *The current tactical method of assisting the Routes in this task and referenced in the report as “black hole reporting” also has limitations not least the fact it would not necessarily identify small sections of tracks that are being missed.*

Asset Information Strategy (AIS) will lead on delivery of the recommendation, working with the Routes who have the accountability for ensuring track has the required measurements. The proposed schedule is shown below. This takes into account feedback from Route Services IT (RSIT) and has added some additional months to the end date to allow for closure of the recommendation.

1.	<i>Project Initiation</i>	<i>June 2019</i>
2.	<i>Requirements gathering</i> <i>(3 months duration)</i>	<i>June 2019 – Sept 2019</i>
3.	<i>Agree Specification</i> <i>(3 months duration)</i>	<i>Sept 2019 – Dec 2019</i>
4.	<i>Tender (allowing for OJEU)</i> <i>(9 months duration)</i>	<i>Jan 2020 – Sept 2020</i>
5.	<i>Development</i> <i>(9 months duration)</i>	<i>Oct 2020 – July 2021</i>
6.	<i>Testing</i> <i>(3 months duration)</i>	<i>Aug 2021 – Oct 2021</i>
7.	<i>Deployment/ELS/Training/Embed</i> <i>(3 months duration)</i>	<i>Nov 2021 – Feb 2022</i>

Stages 1-3 would involve the Routes, AIS and STE who, to differing degrees would be involved throughout the rest of the stages. This cannot necessarily be role specific as particularly with the Routes, those involved may differ per Route. Stage 4 would add Contracts & Procurement to that group for just that stage. Stage 5 would add the selected supplier(s) through to the end.

Timescale: Feb 2022

4. On 30 November 2018, Network Rail provided the following update:
 - *The “black hole” reports that were quoted in the report and that identified the gap in recording at East Somerset Junction are still undertaken as a service by Asset Information Service for all Routes.*
 - *We have weekly calls that all Routes can dial into to question the status of measurement train operations, including what track is covered. We tend to use these meetings to discuss the result of our measurement operations not going to plan rather than as a prompt to ask if there is changes in the overall set of track that we cover, but they can be used to do that.*
 - *We are currently working to product maps of the railway that will show will illustrate where the infrastructure measurement trains record and where they don't. This will include detail down to a level of the S&C that is traversed to move from one running line to another. This is a work in progress and will start with a trial on one data stream, but hopefully it demonstrates that AIS is*

trying to provide another way of demonstrating where the measurement trains operate.

- *I would be happy to work with the Head of Track to re-iterate the need for our Routes to pay particular attention to sections of track that were once covered by the measurement fleet, but where this coverage has been removed. AIS cannot alarm when track comes back into use, as we won't normally be advised. The current method of working relies on the Route to inform us when things in the real world change.*