

The Investment Pathway

Whether you're developing a new station, sidings, depot, electrification scheme or contributing to a broader regeneration project, understanding how to navigate the rail investment process is critical.

The investment pathway below provides an illustrative guide to the typical steps an investor may take from concept to delivery. It highlights where Network Rail (NR), ORR and other industry stakeholders play a role. Based primarily on ORR's Rail Network Investment Framework, it is designed to bring greater clarity, transparency and predictability to third-party investment in the rail network.

It should be noted that every investment project is different and the investment pathway described here is illustrative only. Actual steps, requirements and timelines will vary depending on the scope and complexity of the scheme.

For further details on the mechanisms and processes that may apply, please refer to the Rail Network Investment Framework.

1. Pre-feasibility and market exploration

1.1 Successful infrastructure investments start with a clear idea and a robust rationale. For this initial stage:

Define your project

- What type of scheme are you considering?
- It might be a new connection for rail freight, an upgraded depot for new rolling stock or an enhanced stabling facility.
- Identify the asset type and location and consider what operational or commercial outcome you are aiming for.

Explore previous projects and good practice

- Network Rail provides case studies, lessons learned and practical resources on its website to help investors understand how similar projects have been delivered.
- Reviewing these can offer early insight into effective delivery models, risk allocation and commercial structures.

Make contact early

- Before anything formal is signed, you should reach out to NR (see contact details below).
- This ensures your enquiry is logged and routed correctly. Contact details can be found on NR's website.

For a full list of Network Rail contacts, along with access to their lessons learned and case study libraries, please visit Network Rail's Investing in Rail webpage.

2. Initial Engagement and NR assignment

2.1 Once you have submitted an enquiry to Network Rail:

ASPRO engagement begins

- NR will assign an ASPRO (Asset Protection) Interface Manager and Sponsor. They will act as your key contacts throughout the project.

Understanding your requirements

- With the support of your NR leads, you will agree the likely scope of technical, safety and operational interfaces for your scheme.
- You will also determine whether the scheme is best progressed under a standard contract template (e.g. Asset Protection Agree, Basic Asset Protection Agreement) or a more bespoke arrangement (normally used where a project is valued over £50m or especially complex).
- More information on contractual agreements can be found in chapter 3 of the Rail Network Investment Framework.

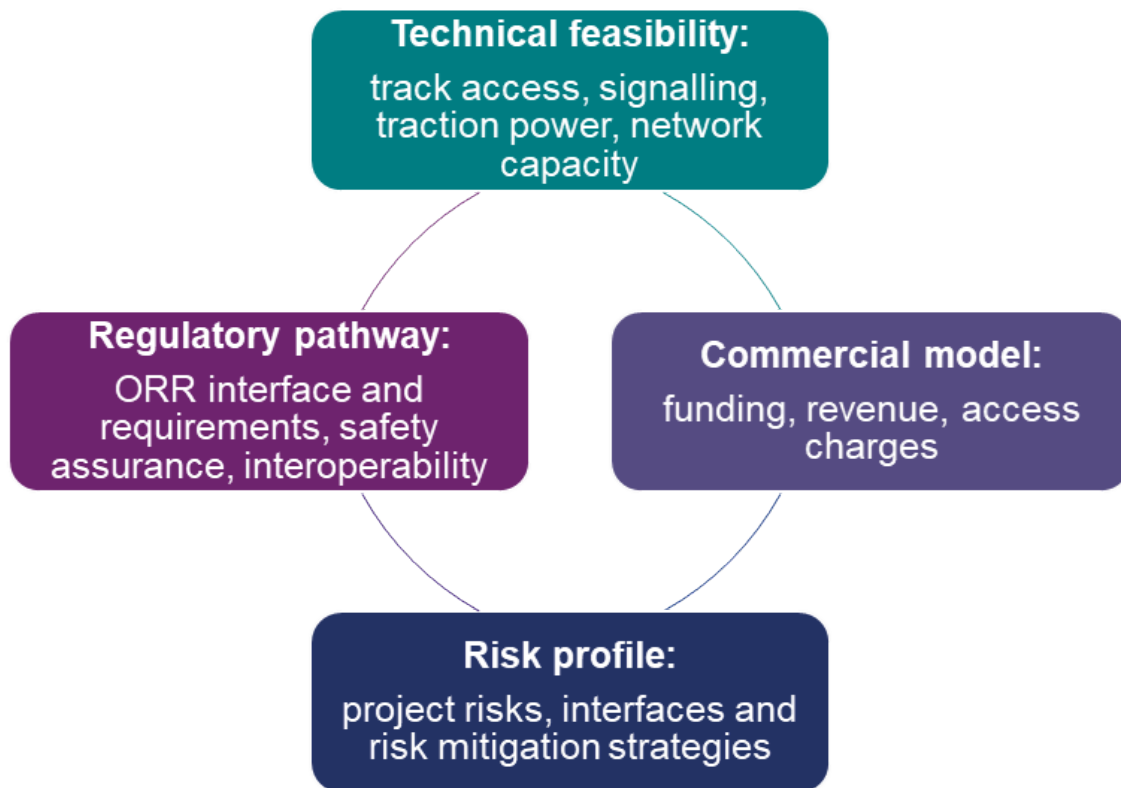
Timelines and expectations

- You will receive a clear overview of what to expect in terms of response times, approvals and stakeholder engagement.

3. Feasibility and Development Services Agreement

3.1 To progress your project to the next stage, you will typically enter into a **Development Services Agreement (DSA)**.

3.2 The DSA covers:



The DSA lets you explore test and shape the investment with expert input from NR and ORR before you commit to capital delivery.

3.3 Fee Fund and Risk Provisions

- a. The output from the DSA will also confirm whether the Industry Risk Fund and Network Rail Risk Fee apply to your project.
- b. Please see chapter 3 of the Rail Network Investment Framework for further details on the risk funds.

4. Regulatory Alignment and Access Planning

4.1 This stage focuses on setting up your project for regulatory and operational delivery.

Network Rail will advise whether ORR involvement is required based on your scheme's scope and complexity.

For example, if your project involves formal access rights, infrastructure interfaces or safety-critical systems, ORR may need to review and approve aspects of it.

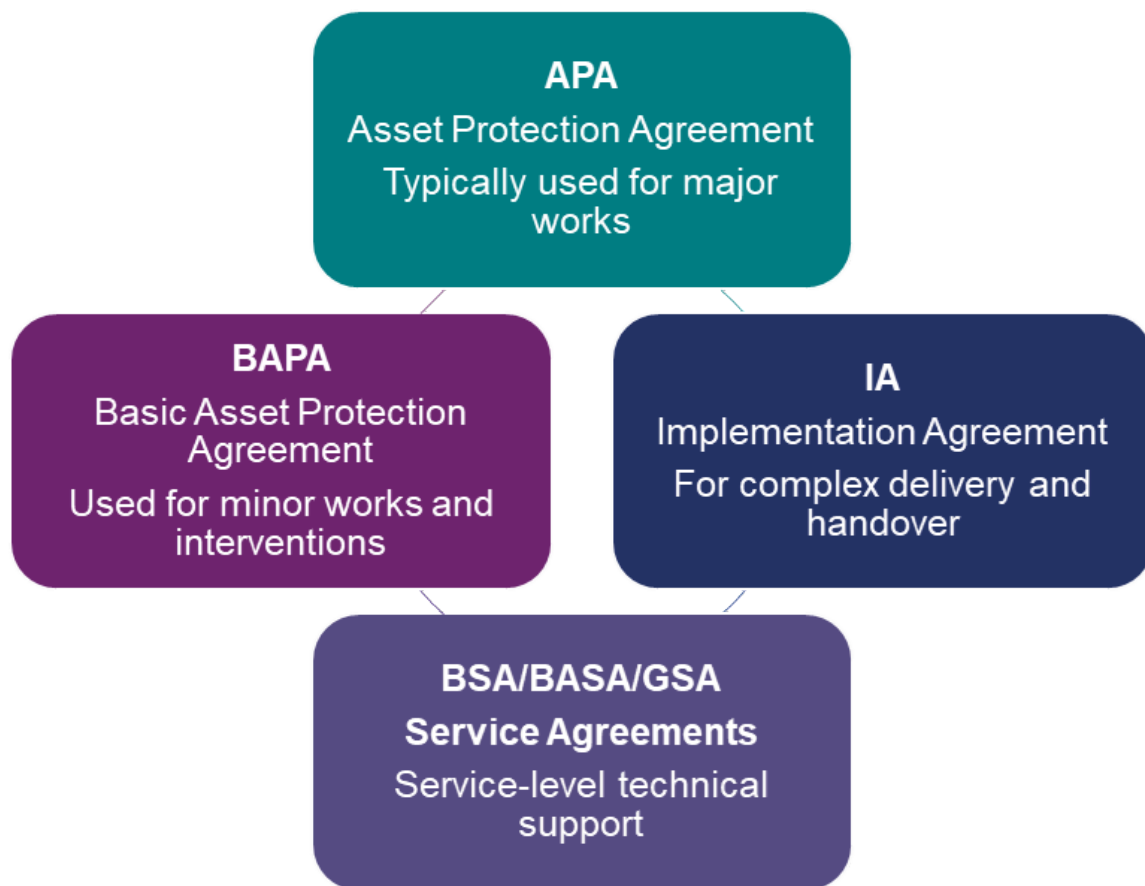
Work with Network Rail to understand how your project will align with applicable regulations, such as safety certification under ROGS, Technical Standards for Interoperability (TSIs), or charges like the Investment Recovery Charge under the 2016 Access and Management Regulations.

Define what access rights you'll need (including track, station or depot facilities access) and how these will be granted.

Engaging early with Network Rail, and with ORR where relevant, helps avoid re-work, clarifies assurance expectations and ensures you're on the right path to access approval and entry into service.

5. Template Contractual Agreement

5.1 Once your scheme is proven feasible, you'll progress to the contracting phase. With NR's guidance, determine the right template contractual agreement:



Template or bespoke contract?

5.2 Most projects use NR's template contractual agreements, but schemes valued above £50m or with unique risks and complexities may require a bespoke agreement.

5.3 Options will be reviewed with NR's legal and commercial teams.

6. Delivery Preparation and Contract Execution

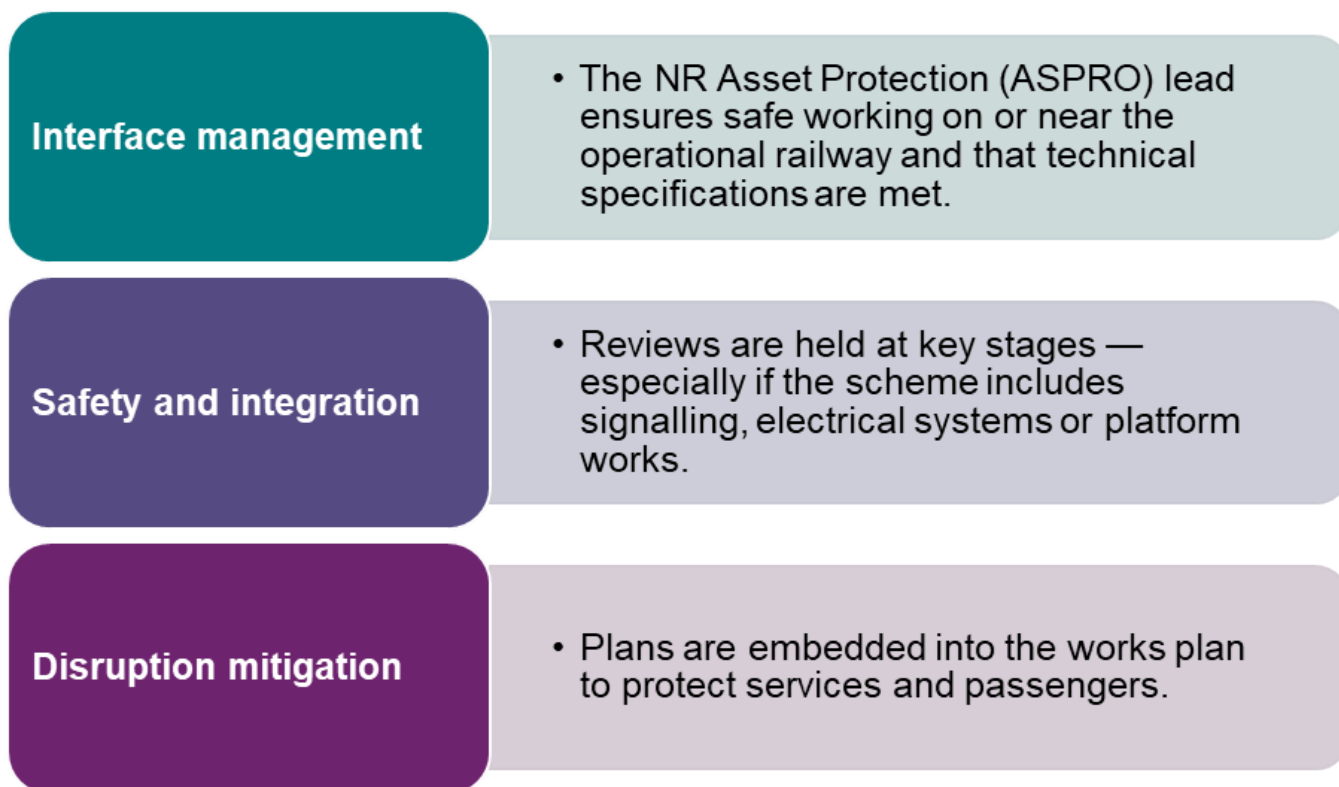
6.1 With the commercial and regulatory frameworks in place:



6.2 Once contracts are signed, your project enters the delivery phase with a shared understanding of risk, responsibilities and the pathway to entry into service.

7. Construction and NR interface management

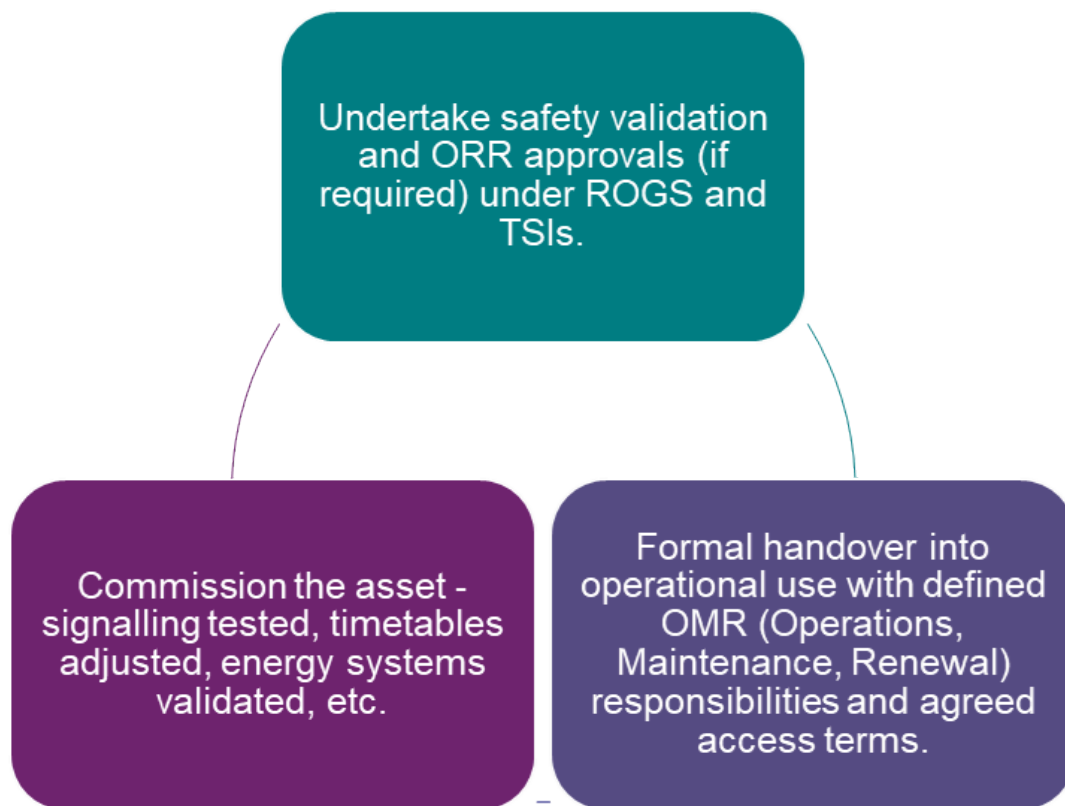
7.1 During delivery, you will work closely with NR to ensure safe and compliant works:



NR's ASPRO (Asset Protection) framework is designed to be responsive, helping third party projects stay on track whilst protecting rail operations.

8. Testing, Handover and Entry into Service

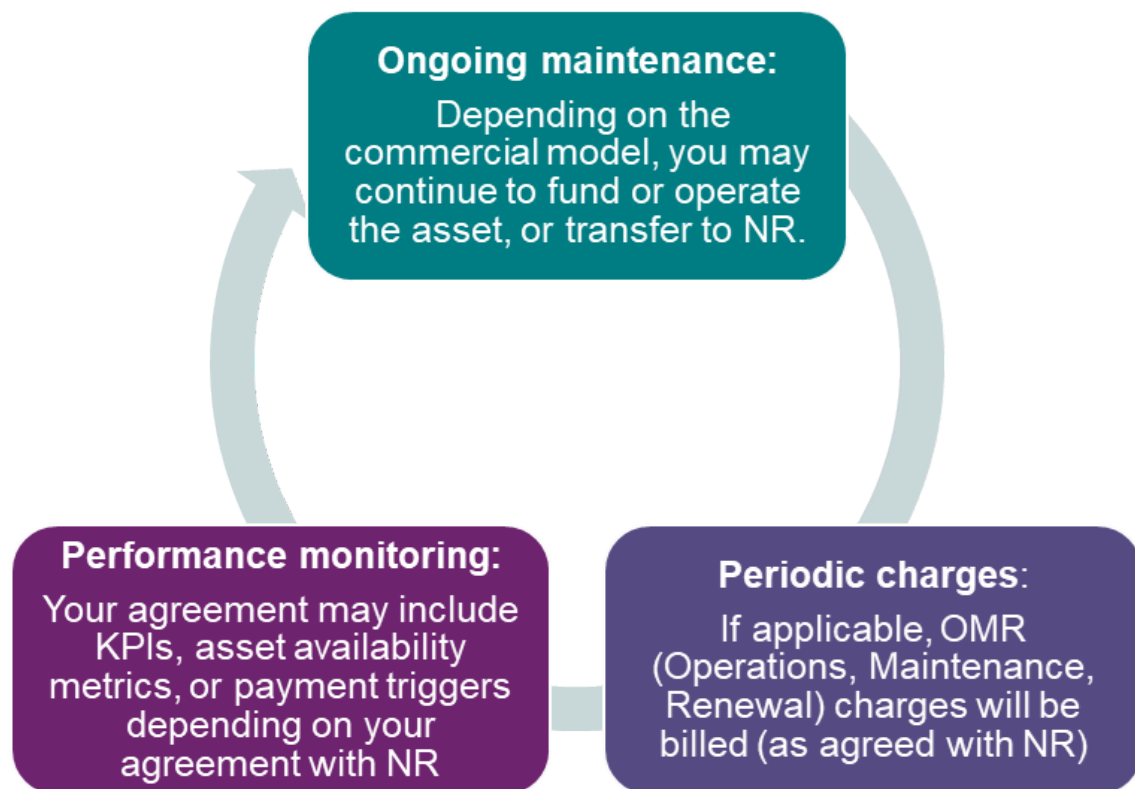
8.1 Once construction is complete and your asset is built:



This phase helps ensure your asset isn't just built, but that it is also operationally accepted, safe and integrated into the network.

9. Operations, Performance and Ongoing Charges

9.1 After handover:



10. Summary checklist for investors

Stage	Illustrative Key Actions
Pre-Feasibility	Define scope, explore market, contact NR
Engagement	Submit enquiry, get Network Rail contact
Feasibility	Enter DSA, assess risks, funding, compliance
Regulatory Planning	Engage ORR, clarify access, safety & recovery charge issues

Stage	Illustrative Key Actions
Contracting	Choose APA/BAPA/IA template, define risk split
Delivery	NR oversees work, interface, and disruption planning
Entry into Service	Test, certify, commission, authorisation
Post-Handover	Monitor performance, manage OMR, review charges