

APPLICATION TO THE OFFICE OF RAIL AND ROAD FOR A PASSENGER TRACK ACCESS CONTRACT, OR AN AMENDMENT TO AN EXISTING CONTRACT

ORR ensures that train operating companies have fair access to the rail network and that best use is made of capacity. If a train operator wants to access the national railway network, it will need a track access agreement with Network Rail which requires ORR's approval under the Railways Act 1993. When determining access to the network, we must have regard to our [statutory duties](#), most of which are set out in section 4 of the Act. We must exercise our functions (which include the approval of access contracts) in a way that we consider best achieves those duties.

Use this form to apply to the Office of Rail and Road (ORR) for a passenger track access contract, or an amendment to an existing contract by a supplemental agreement, under sections 17-22A or the Railways Act 1993.

It sets out ORR's standard information requirements for considering applications. Our [track access guidance](#) (and our [making an application](#) guidance in particular) explains the process, timescales and the issues we will consider. Please read the guidance before completing the contract and this form.

If the facility owner and beneficiary have agreed terms, the facility owner should fill in the form. If not, the beneficiary should fill in the form.

A pre-application industry consultation is usually required before submitting an application. Please see the industry [code of practice for track access application consultations](#) for more information.

This form should be completed up to section 10 and sent to consultees along with a copy of the proposed contract or supplemental agreement. Sections 10 and 11 should be filled in after the consultation and before applying to ORR.

We are happy to talk to you informally before you apply. Please contact us [here](#). You can download a copy of this form, and of our model track access contract, from our [website](#). Please ensure that you are using the latest version of this form as published on our website. We may ask for applications which have not used the latest version to be resubmitted.

You may also use and adapt this form if necessary to apply to use railway facilities other than those of Network Rail. Do not use this form for HS1, for which a separate form is available on our [website](#).

1. Application Summary

1.1 Beneficiary company name:

Alliance Rail

1.2 Facility owner details:

Network Rail:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
Region:	Southern <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Eastern <input type="checkbox"/>	North West & Central <input type="checkbox"/>	Wales & Western <input type="checkbox"/>	Scotland's Railway <input type="checkbox"/>
Other Facility Owner:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Please state:			

1.3 Application under the Railways Act 1993 section:

17 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	18 <input type="checkbox"/>	22 <input type="checkbox"/>	22A <input type="checkbox"/>
Supplemental Number:			
Current contract date:			
Current contract expiry date:			

1.4 Applicant status:

Public Service Operator <input type="checkbox"/>	Public service contract start date:	
	Public service contract end date:	
	Name of funder (e.g. DfT, Local Authority):	
	Does the funder support this application?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Open Access <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Charter Operator <input type="checkbox"/>		

1.5 Executive summary of the proposed contract or amendment:

This application is seeking to introduce 8 new daily services (each way) between London Waterloo and Marchwood and 7 new daily services between Southampton and Marchwood using available capacity and off-lease refurbished Class 769 tri/bi mode trains. An additional number of start/end of day services may also be timetabled to operate between Eastleigh and Waterloo and Eastleigh and Marchwood. The station at Marchwood will be re-opened and re-furbished (or possibly re-sited) and train Interiors will be upgraded with 2+2 seating in standard class and 2+1 in first class. Trains will be formed of 4 and/or 8 car formations and can operate at 100mph.

Proposed commencement date:	September 2026
End date:	September 2033
Date approval or directions wanted by:	July 2025

1.6 Industry consultation:

Who carried out the consultation?	Network Rail & Alliance		
Consultation start date:	18 December 2024	Consultation end date:	31 January 2025* *Alliance has agreed a delayed response from the DfT
Not carried out <input type="checkbox"/>			

1.7 Applicant details

Facility Owner Company: Network Rail Contact name: Job title: Address: Waterloo General Office, LONDON, SE1 8SW	Beneficiary Company: Alliance Rail Contact name: Ian Yeowart Job title: Managing Director Address: Riverside Lodge, Naburn Lane, Fulford, YORK, YO19 4RB
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Phone: E-mail:	Phone: 01904662814 E-mail: iy@granduniontrains.com
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1.7 Date of application to ORR:

10 April 2025

1.8 Checklist of documents attached to the application form:

- Proposed new contract (S17 or S18) or supplemental agreement (S22 or S22A)
- Marked up Schedule 5 (where applicable)
- Marked up comparison to model contract (where applicable)
- All consultation correspondence
- Supporting documentation required for competing services (see section 6.2)
- Other supporting documents, side letters or collateral agreements (please list):

A paper outlining the importance of the reopening of the Waterside Line
AECOM Modelling work and other information to follow

2. Licence and railway safety certificate

2.1 Please state whether:

- you intend to operate the services yourself; or
- have them operated on your behalf.
 - if so, please name the proposed operating company:

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2.2 Does the proposed operator of the services:

- (a) hold a valid train operating licence under section 8 of the Railways Act 1993 or an exemption under section 7, **and**
- (b) hold a valid safety certificate under the Railways and Other Guided Transport Systems (Safety) Regulations 2006.

If the answer to (a) **or** (b) is no, please state the point reached in obtaining a licence, exemption and/or safety certificate.

Alliance Rail does not currently have a valid train operating license and an accepted safety certificate, but these will be procured following the award of access rights if the application is approved.

3. The proposed contract or amendment

3.1 Application overview: Please detail the proposed contract or amendment. This should cover the services, the commercial terms, and the reasons for making the application in the terms proposed. This information should be laid out clearly and concisely and fully highlight the changes from the previous version of the contract (in the case of an amendment).

There has been a long-held aspiration to return passenger rail services to the 'Waterside' line which extends from Totton through Marchwood to Fawley. A significant investment was made in evaluating the potential for a new service with a detailed Draft Business Case being developed alongside a consultation on a Strategy Research Report which elicited 941 responses. A separate Network Rail consultation received over 1500 responses. There was overwhelming support for the re-introduction

of passenger rail services. However, the full scheme itself was deemed unaffordable by the Government in September 2024.

There is significant merit in introducing passenger services on the route to support the further passenger benefits that come from limited competition 'in the market'. These competitive benefits are consistently demonstrated on the East Coast Main Line. Alliance has therefore brought forward this application to re-instate passenger services as far as Marchwood (initially) along with a number of additional services to London Waterloo, which will also improve service provision at Hook, Totton and Eastleigh.

The branch line is fully operational between Totton and Marchwood, and the station can be brought back into use relatively quickly (or potentially re-sited). Alliance has discussed the re-introduction of services with colleagues at Network Rail including a site visit in early December.

In our discussions so far, Network Rail has been positive and supportive, and a draft initial timetable has been developed. We will continue to engage with Network Rail, and it is hoped by the time consultation has ended and the application ready for submission to the ORR, that this submission can be made as a Section 18 application, as many of the operational issues that are normally raised have already been addressed through the previous significant study work that has been undertaken by Network Rail.

The main difference in Alliance's proposal from the work so far done on the study is that a [roughly] two hourly service will be provided directly between London Waterloo and Marchwood with a local service in between, operating between Southampton and Marchwood, giving an hourly service for most of the day. This expanded service will strengthen the initial draft business case and should lead to an expansion of services towards Fawley as was initially envisaged.

The proposed calling pattern is: Marchwood – Totton – Southampton Central – Southampton Airport – Eastleigh – Winchester – Basingstoke – Hook – London Waterloo. Calls at Woking and Wimbledon are no longer being considered.

Class 769 bi-mode (DC/diesel) trains are planned, and we have agreed a lease with the vehicle owners Porterbrook, subject to finalising contractual terms. Trains are capable of operating at 100mph on the main line and will operate in diesel mode between Totton and Marchwood. Porterbrook is undertaking gauging and trains are available now. However, in order to allow for modifications and also the timescales for a decision, if approved, services are planned to commence in September 2026. Trains will be internally upgraded with new seating in 2+2 formation and 2+1 seating in one first class vehicle. Trains will be maintained and stabled at Eastleigh.

Initially it is planned that services will operate to/from an improved station at the current Marchwood site, with a later phase potentially moving the station around 500 metres to provide a new platform and provide immediate access to significant parking. This will require further discussions with a number of authorities and those discussions will continue during the initial application phase.

If the application is approved, then a further phase would be evaluated in extending the service towards Fawley, providing a new station, or possibly stations, developing further the outputs from the detailed studies already undertaken.

At this stage, the re-opening of the line to passenger traffic and the re-opening and upgrade of Marchwood station are the focus. With trains available now, the application seeks approval to begin operations in September 2026. Based on some infrastructure and fleet investment, Alliance is seeking a 7 year track access contract. It is anticipated that a new bi-mode fleet will be sought during the operational period, and that, along with the potential further phases, would be subject to further applications in the future.

3.2 Safety risks: Please explain any important safety risks that have been identified arising from the proposal and how these will be controlled (by reference to the facility owner's safety authorisation and the train operator's safety certificate).

Level crossing risks on the branch line have been evaluated as part of the extensive studies undertaken with no significant risks (for an hourly service) highlighted. Marchwood station already has a full time member of Network Rail staff in-situ to manage the manual crossing. All other crossings are AHB.

3.3 Contract duration: For new agreements or extensions to existing agreements, please provide justification for the proposed duration and, if more than 5 years, with reference to the [Railways \(Access, Management and Licensing\) Regulations 2016](#).

Alliance would be looking for an initial 7 year track access contract to reflect the infrastructure, rolling stock and staffing investment along the route.

3.4 Terms not agreed with the facility owner (for applications under sections 17 or 22A only):

Please explain any areas of the application which have **not** been agreed, the reasons for the failure to agree and the reasons for seeking these provisions.

A number of meetings have taken place with Network Rail, including a site visit in early December to ascertain the current position and discuss potential station re-siting and the requirements for extending the service in the future towards Fawley. Both senior management and operational staff on the ground were very helpful in providing information and enabling the visit to go ahead safely. We are continuing to engage with the Route, and it is hoped that colleagues at Network Rail can work with us in developing our draft timings into a compliant timetable, thus enabling the introduction of a regular passenger service to return to the branch for the first time since 1966, as has been envisaged in the Network Rail study. While Alliance had hoped this could be an agreed Section 18 application by the time the application is ready for submission to the ORR, that has not yet been possible. However, the parties will continue to engage in trying to reach an agreement at sometime during the ORR deliberation period.

3.5 Bespoke provisions (departures from ORR's model access contracts)

Does the proposed contract include any departures from ORR's model access contract:

Yes No

If yes, please set out and explain any:

- areas where the drafting of the application changes ORR's published template access contracts (as appropriate, cross-referencing to the answers below). Please also explain why these departures have been made.

- instances where the proposal departs from the charging and/or performance regimes established by ORR's latest periodic review (or subsequent interim reviews) as reflected in ORR's model access contracts, including the financial implications (e.g. establishment of an access charge supplement or rebate).

- new processes (e.g. a self-modification provision) which have been added. Please also demonstrate fully how this new process is robust and complete.

3.6 Consolidated contract

For amendments to existing contracts, is the version of the consolidated contract on our [website](#) fully up to date? If not, please explain why not.

N/A

4. The impacts of the proposal

4.1 Benefits: please set out what specific benefits the proposal will achieve. Please describe the benefits to passengers and any impact on other operators, including freight operators.

The benefits of limited competition are now well established, and in this instance will be accompanied by a re-opening which itself will help, to some degree, address the road congestion that exists in the Southampton area. The local benefits are significant and are best captured in the extensive study work that has been previously undertaken. Supporting information from those documents is attached to the application.

The delivery of a new open access service to Marchwood without public investment can strengthen the case for further private (or public) investment in the future to extend services towards Fawley.

4.2 Capacity: How have you satisfied yourself that there is enough network capacity for the services in the proposal? Please include details on all relevant capacity considerations, including but not limited to track, platform availability, and power supply traction.

Timetable work has identified capacity on the main line with a draft timetable developed. At present, on average, only one or two freight trains a week uses the branch line and we are now looking to work closely with the Route to develop our draft timetable further.

4.3 Performance: What is the impact on network performance? Please outline your assurance process that shows that any performance risk is tolerable in comparison to the benefits of the application. Please explain any risk mitigations. Please attach any associated evidence to support your case.

Planned trains are line speed capable and we will work with colleagues at Network Rail on any identified mitigation measures. More trains does not necessarily equate to worsening performance as has been proven on a number of occasions.

4.4 Maintenance and renewals: Are there any implications for the facility owner's maintenance and renewal activities?

No.

5. The expression of access rights

5.1 Changes to rights: please provide full descriptions of any new rights required, as compared to the previous contract (in the case of an amendment). Please attach a fully marked-up version or document comparison of any tables in Schedule 5 which are being modified as a result of this application.

N/A

5.2 Flexing rights: Please explain any limitations on the facility owner's flexing rights in the proposal and the rationale for such limitations.

None

5.3 Specified equipment: Please explain any changes to specified equipment (rolling stock). Has the vehicle and route acceptance procedure in the Network Code (Part F) has been completed? Please explain whether you have, or will have, the rolling stock necessary to exercise the rights.

Route acceptance is currently being undertaken. We have the rolling stock necessary and expect to have agreements in place prior to formal submission to the ORR.

5.4 Contractual obligations: Are the proposed services necessary to fulfil obligations under a public service contract? For publicly contracted operators seeking additional access rights, we will expect to see evidence of funder support for the specific rights and of operators' intent and ability to operate the new services.

No

5.5 Public funding: Other than the DfT, Welsh Government or Transport Scotland, are the proposed services subject to financial support from central or local government including PTEs. If so, please give details.

No

5.6 Long Term Planning Process: Is the Long Term Planning Process (or similar devolved authority or regional service delivery project) relevant to this application? If so, please explain how the proposed rights are consistent or inconsistent with this.

The application is consistent with a number of previous and recent studies on re-introducing passenger services to the route along the branch line.

6. Competing passenger services:

We would expect to apply the 'not primarily abstractive' test to:

- (i) a new open access service which would compete with franchised services and so impact on the public sector funder's budget;
- (ii) a new franchised service which would compete with an existing franchised service, where we would expect to focus the test on areas where the competing franchised services are operated on behalf of different funders or where for some other reason there are particular concerns over the impact on a funder's budget; and
- (iii) a new service, which might be open access or franchised, which would compete with an existing open access service and which, if it caused the existing open access operator to withdraw from the market, could reduce overall competition on the network.

6.1 Please state if your application is for a competing passenger service, and if so please describe the nature of the competition:

It will compete at a number of locations between Waterloo and Southampton. However, it provides an improved service at Hook in particular, and re-opens a closed station, introducing a completely new service to Marchwood which will benefit both local and longer distance passengers.

6.2 For competing services, please also confirm that you have attached as part of your submission to ORR the following:

- Business plan, including details of:
 - forecasts of passenger traffic and revenues, including forecast methodology;
 - pricing strategies;
 - ticketing arrangements;
 - rolling stock specifications (e.g. load factor, number of seats, wagon configuration);
 - marketing strategy;
 - estimated elasticities of the services (e.g. price elasticity, elasticity with respect to quality characteristics of the services).
- Demand forecasting (including associated spreadsheet models) demonstrating modelled generation : abstraction ratio.
- Indicative timetables, including associated .spg files

7. Incentives

7.1 Train operator performance: please describe any planned performance improvement initiatives and/or enhancement projects associated with the operation of the proposed services aimed at improving operator performance.

We are looking to invest in improving the infrastructure on the branch line. Trains will also have driver advisory systems installed.

7.2 Facility owner performance: please describe any planned performance improvement initiatives and/or enhancement projects associated with the operation of the proposed services aimed at improving the facility owner's performance.

See 7.1

7.3 Monitoring of services: Will all proposed services be monitored for performance throughout their journey? If not, please explain.

All services will be monitored.

7.4 Performance regime changes (for applications under sections 17 or 22A only): where applicable, please provide justification for any changes to Schedule 8 of the track access contract in the proposal. If necessary, please provide any relevant information in support of the changes proposed.

N/A

8. Enhancement

8.1 Enhancement details: where the proposal provides for the delivery of any network enhancements, or the services in the proposal are subject to any planned network enhancements, please give full details of the relevant enhancement schemes, including a summary of outputs from the scheme, timescales and the extent to which the network change procedure in the Network Code (Part G) has been completed (where appropriate, by reference to submissions made under ORR's enhancement reporting framework).

Improvements to the branch line resilience although line speed improvements are not sought at this stage. There will be significant improvements at Marchwood station to enable it to be brought back into use.

8.2 Enhancement charges: please confirm that the arrangements for the funding of any network enhancements are consistent with the [investment framework](#), and summarise the level and duration of payments, and the assumed rate of return.

This is being discussed with Network Rail.

9. Other

9.1 Associated applications to ORR: please state whether this application is being made in parallel with, or relates to, any other current or forthcoming application to ORR (e.g. in respect of track, station or light maintenance depot access contracts). Where the application is being made in parallel with any other application from the same operator, please ensure the applications are consistent with one another. Where the application relies on another operator relinquishing access rights, please provide evidence that this process has been completed.

Alliance will be seeking station and depot access agreements alongside this application.

9.2 Side letters and collateral agreements: please confirm here that the whole of the proposal between the parties has been submitted with this application and that there are no side letters or other documents which affect it.

No side letters.

9.3 Confidential redactions: please list any information that you have redacted from any documentation sent to consultees. If there has been no pre-application consultation, please list any information you want us to exclude from publication. Please provide full reasons for any redactions.

No information apart from the draft TT was sent to consultees.

10. Pre-application consultation

10.1 The consultation:

If consultation has not been carried out, explain why not. If it has, please list the consultees.

Who conducted the consultation?

Network Rail.

List all consultees who responded and include their responses and any associated documentation or correspondence between the parties.

SWR – GTR – XCT – GWR – London Travelwatch – Railfuture Wessex – Transport Focus

10.2 Resolved issues: please explain any issues raised by consultees which have been resolved.

Transport Focus and Railfuture Wessex were supportive of the application. London Travelwatch supported the application provided it does not have a material impact at Waterloo.

10.3 Unresolved issues: Please explain any issues raised by consultees which have **not** been satisfactorily resolved and why you think these issues should not stop ORR approving the application.

GTR/XCT and GWR issues were mostly around potential impact to a small number of services within the draft timetable, and while those are not fully resolved we are working with NR on developing a fully compliant timetable, and that work is ongoing.

SWR raised concerns about impending changes to its own aspirations to operate more services, but no applications have been made to ORR in respect of any SWR expansion. Even so, the small number of trains applied for by Alliance would not impinge on SWR's ability to increase services over time.

SWR also raised the issue of abstraction, the only consultee to do so. Our work with AECOM shows modelled abstraction numbers at the lower end of recent approvals, with an NPA ratio well above the 0.30 threshold.

10.4 Subsequent Changes: Have any changes been made to the proposal following consultation?

During the consultation period we were lobbied by a number of parties in respect of the calling pattern, which we looked at in detail. Following review, no changes are proposed, although we will no longer be looking to have an option to call at Wimbledon and Woking.

11. Certification

Warning: Under section 146 of the Railways Act 1993, any person who, in giving any information or making any application under or for the purposes of any provision of the Railways Act 1993, makes any statement which he knows to be false in a material particular, or recklessly makes any statement which is false in a material particular, is guilty of an offence and so liable to criminal prosecution.

For agreed applications under section 18 or 22, Network Rail should complete the information below. For disputed applications under section 17 or 22A, the beneficiary should complete it.

I certify that the information provided in this form is true and complete to the best of my knowledge

Signed Date

Name (in caps) Job title

For (company)

2. Submission

12.1 What to send: please supply the application form, the proposed contract or amendment and, where possible, any other supporting information, in electronic form by e-mail, **in plain Microsoft Word or Open Document Text format** (i.e. excluding any macros, auto-para or page numbering, or other auto-formatting).

12.2 Where to send it:

Email: track.access@orr.gov.uk